

Syria hopes Baker will overcome obstacles

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria said Sunday it hoped U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's latest trip to the region would succeed in overcoming Israeli obstacles to Middle East peace talks and enable a conference to go ahead. "Israel has not yet given a clear yes to president (George) Bush's proposals. It has put a number of preconditions and we hope these preconditions would be lifted," Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharra told Reuters. Israel opposes giving up the occupied territories in exchange for peace, as sought by Washington. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government also refuses to stop building settlements in the occupied territories, and objects to the participation of Palestinians from East Jerusalem at the peace conference. Mr. Sharra was speaking at Damascus airport where he met Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez, who is in Damascus for talks on the peace process. Mr. Baker arrived in Cairo Sunday at the start of his eighth tour of the region. He is due in Damascus on Tuesday. Mr. Sharra said Syria would discuss with Mr. Baker "recent American efforts to overcome all the (Israeli) obstacles before the convening of the conference at the end of this month." "We hope (the Americans) had positive responses to overcome these difficulties especially from the Israeli side."



U.N. experts carry out inspections in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Backed by sweeping new powers to search and destroy, U.N. inspectors continued their probe of Iraq's most lethal weapons Sunday and reported good cooperation from the Baghdad authorities. U.N. experts on nuclear, chemical and ballistic weapons made trips to seek out dismantled Iraq's weapons under terms of the Gulf war ceasefire. They have new powers under a Security Council vote Friday which gave the world body authority not only to dismantle existing weapons but to prevent the importation of any material that might be used in future arms. The Iraqi government has protested about the new measures at the United Nations but has said little in Baghdad beyond new routine attacks on U.N. "spy missions" on its soil. A new nuclear team visited unspecified Iraqi installations on Sunday. Pierre Bilos, the deputy head of the mission, said, "We are following up information from previous inspections," Mr. Bilos told reporters as his team, the seventh such mission in Iraq, returned to its Baghdad hotel. He said his search "confirms information which was gained from preceding inspections," but declined to give any details.

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Bahrain hits Israeli flights over Iraq

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain Sunday condemned flights by Israeli jets over Iraq and other Arab countries last week, the official Gulf News Agency (GNA) said. A statement issued after a weekly cabinet meeting described the flights as "provocative," GNA said. Iraq said in a letter to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar Tuesday that four Israeli F-15 fighters, coming from the direction of Syria, overflew Iraqi territory for 30 minutes on Oct. 4 before entering Saudi Arabian airspace. The White House said it had complained to Israel about the flights. Israel brushed aside the complaint. Bahrain's cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, also condemned Israel's policy of building more Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories and forcibly occupying Palestinian houses, GNA said.

Protesters splatter Iranian envoy

REMI, Italy (R) — Three Iraqis threw eggs containing red ink at Iran's ambassador to Italy Sunday, splashing his face and hair, police said. Shouting "murderers," the three men interrupted a prize-giving ceremony at an economic forum in Rimini on the Adriatic coast. They threw eggs at Ambassador Hamid Aboutelebi as he prepared to receive a prize in the name of Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati. Iranian bodyguards overpowered them.

Polisario: Morocco increasing 'spy-flights'

ALGIERS (R) — Polisario guerrillas said Sunday Moroccan planes had carried out intensified reconnaissance flights over the Western Sahara. "During the past 48 hours, the Moroccan air force has intensified reconnaissance flights over Saharan territory... flying several times on Oct. 11 and 12 each day over the areas of Meharie and Tifariti in the northeast of the Western Sahara," the Polisario said in a statement to Reuters. It called again for United Nations pressure on Morocco to end what it termed these provocations. The Polisario and Morocco have accused each other of trying to wreck a five-week-old U.N.-sponsored ceasefire which is to precede a referendum next year to give the Saharans a choice between independence or integration with Morocco, which claims the former Spanish colony.

'3,000 Sudan rebels killed in power struggle'

KHARTOUM (AP) — A newspaper reported Sunday that 3,000 southern rebels have been killed in a power struggle between rebel leader John Garang and some of his top aides. The government's Al Injaz Al Watani newspaper quoted relief workers returning from Kenya as saying that the two rebel factions engaged in heavy fighting for five days recently in the southern Upper Nile region. The fighting reportedly resulted in the death of 3,000 rebels and the injury of scores more. The unidentified relief workers said they gathered their information from rebels who fled to neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya during the fighting.

Afghan ruling party denies rift reports

KABUL (R) — A senior member of Afghanistan's ruling Watan (Homeland) Party denied reports of growing disquiet within a pro-democracy wing of the party. Sulaiman Laeq, one of the party's four deputy chairmen, said it retained a monolithic unity and he was unaware of any dissension with President Najibullah, its leader. Party sources said last week a nucleus of about 20 central committee members believed the party needed urgent and far-reaching democratic reforms which Mr. Najibullah would not deliver. But Mr. Laeq, a veteran party figure described by many political sources as a hardliner, said: "There is neither a hard line nor a soft line in our party."

Baker arrives in Cairo, meets Pankin on Friday

CAIRO (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, apparently near success in setting up a Middle East peace conference, will meet in occupied Jerusalem on Friday with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, hoping that Moscow is ready to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel. "We have been urging that for some time," a U.S. official said as Mr. Baker flew here Sunday to begin a four-country trip designed to nail down terms for Arab-Israeli negotiations. He will meet Monday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, an enthusiastic supporter, and hold talks on succeeding days in Jordan, Syria and Israel before linking up with Mr. Pankin, who is making his own trip through the region. The key to Mr. Baker's hopes for a peace conference before the end of the month is held by the Palestinians, the last holdouts. While Mr. Baker is making the rounds, the Palestinians are expected to announce their willingness to attend the conference as part of a joint delegation with Jordan. They evidently agreed on a formula with Mr. Baker in talks at the State Department Thursday and Friday, but need the final approval of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Mr. Baker's scheduling of a

meeting with Mr. Pankin in occupied Jerusalem signalled that the United States and the Soviet Union may finally be ready to announce the date of the peace talks. At the Moscow summit in July, the two nations, serving as co-sponsors, set October as their target. There was still no decision on where the peace conference would be held. Mr. Baker was met at Cairo airport by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who said earlier peace was only possible if Israel was willing to give up occupied Arab lands for peace. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir says he will never accept this. Mr. Musa, speaking a few hours before the arrival of Mr. Baker, told reporters he believes all sides can overcome the obstacles which are facing the convening of the conference later this month. Mr. Musa also said Mr. Pankin will visit Cairo Oct. 21 to discuss the peace conference. "It has to be understood that we are not only interested in the conference but in the peace process. Without (the principle of) land in exchange for peace, we cannot have peace. And without recognising the rights of everyone to security and self determination, we cannot have a peace process," Mr. Musa said. The Egyptian minister said he believed participating sides will be able to overcome obstacles and convene the peace conference. On Saturday President Mubarak, who is due to meet Mr. Baker Monday, held talks with Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad. Cairo and Damascus have worked closely since Mr. Baker initiated the latest peace bid. The United States and the Soviet Union are sticking to their aim of convening the conference by Oct. 31 but have not issued invitations, apparently waiting until success is assured. They have said delegations would have 10 days to prepare, so formal invitations would have to be sent by Oct. 21. Syrian newspapers said Sunday Mr. Baker will face a tough task trying to arrange a peace conference. They blamed Israeli intransigence. The daily Al Thawra wondered whether Mr. Baker, during his new trip to the region, can "bypass the mines that Israel has placed on the road of the current efforts to convene the international conference." The paper said a commentary published in an Israeli newspaper (Continued on page 5).

PLO says U.S. failed to offer assurances in Washington talks

TUNIS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has accused the United States of double standards and hostility towards the Palestinians by failing to give them the assurances they want on a Middle East peace conference. In a letter to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who will be chairing the Commonwealth summit in Harare, Mr. Arafat said that in talks with Palestinian envoys, Washington had given no ground on Jerusalem, Palestinian representation and a halt to Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. "All these hostile positions are in flagrant violation of international legality and U.N. resolutions... and reflect a continuation of the double standards policy," Mr. Arafat said. The letter, published Sunday by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, was written following a meeting in Washington between a Palestinian mission and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Palestinian officials told Reuters. It said: "The American administration rejects independent

Palestinian representation at the planned conference... (but) only the PLO has the right to pick its representatives and decide on how it will participate at this conference." "The American government refuses to place the Jerusalem problem on the conference agenda and also rejects the presence of Jerusalem-born people in the Palestinian delegation... thus going along with the Israeli point of view," it added. "The American government has not been able to obtain a stoppage or a freeze on Jewish settlements (in the occupied territories) as the peace conference is about to begin which means that the plunder of Palestinian lands will continue." Israel demands a right of veto on the composition of the Palestinian delegation to the peace conference and refuses to accept PLO leaders or representatives of Arab East Jerusalem. Mr. Arafat's comments coincided with the start of a new Middle East trip by Mr. Baker, who hopes to make final arrangements to convene the peace conference by the end of the month. He is scheduled to visit Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Israel. A Palestinian delegation met with Mr. Baker in Washington last week and reportedly were close to announcing their willingness to attend the peace conference as part of a joint delegation with Jordan. Mr. Arafat last week proposed a summit of Arab leaders to work out a unified position for the peace conference. The PLO chairman was in Algeria on Sunday, reportedly discussing the possibility of holding such a summit in Algiers. Mr. Arafat held talks with President Chadli Benjedid and Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi, the Algerian news agency APS said. The agency gave no details of the meeting. Algeria is a staunch supporter of the PLO, which last month held a meeting of the Palestine Council (PNC) in Algiers. The meeting welcomed U.S. efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference but did not commit Palestinians to attend.

Reports conflict over Turkish incursion after Iraqi warning

ANKARA (Agencies) — Conflicting reports emerged Sunday over a Turkish military incursion into Iraq to fight Kurdish rebels. Some reports said the air and land operation had come to an end Sunday, while others said the Turkish push against rebel bases in northern Iraq continued Sunday for the third day. Iraq meanwhile warned Turkey against such incursions. Witnesses quoted by Reuters said Turkish troops, planes and helicopters crossed into northern Iraq to attack rebel Turkish Kurds for the third day in a row. They said at least 10 planes flew into Iraqi airspace and hundreds of soldiers marched into Iraq from the border village of Cinarli in southeast Turkey. Helicopter-borne commandos also headed into northern Iraq, the witnesses said. There was no immediate confirmation from the Turkish general staff. A spokesman contacted earlier said he did not know if cross-border attacks would continue Sunday. But Siyem Banaa, a representative for the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) here, told the Associated Press he was informed that no Turkish air raids took place Sunday morning.

The document quoted press reports as saying five people were wounded in the raids. It called on Turkey to "immediately stop these violations to maintain good neighbourly relations and avoid the grave consequences that might result from their continuation." Ankara has responded to previous Iraqi complaints about military incursions by saying Iraq's borders were unguarded by the Iraqi army and that the PKK was being supported by Iraqi Kurds. The Kurdistan Front, which represents Iraqi rebel groups including the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, denies aiding Turkish Kurds. The front said Friday's raids had killed three Kurdish guerrillas and wounded nine others. The Iraqi document said "at the time the Foreign Ministry strongly protests" this flagrant violation, it reserves Iraq's full right to take the measure it sees appropriate in accordance with (the) U.N. Charter and international laws. Turkish troops are planting mines in a "no-go" zone along



Israeli settlers occupying a house in Silwan in Arab Jerusalem fortify themselves with barbed wire as Arab neighbours look on

Sharon visits Silwan settlers, discloses government backing

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon Sunday visited Jewish settlers who last week occupied six houses in an Arab Jerusalem neighbourhood and announced his support for the squatters. "One of our goals is to resettle (with) Jews, buildings that belonged to Jews in the past," Mr. Sharon told Israel radio during his visit to the neighbourhood of Silwan. The settlers said last week they had acquired 16 Arab houses in Silwan through a state-run housing company, Amidar, which falls under Mr. Sharon's control. Arab residents said the settlers stormed the houses without obtaining legal ownership. Mr. Sharon, who opposes Israel's participation in peace talks Mr. Baker is trying to convene, has spearheaded a drive to increase Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. A left-wing member of parliament said last week that the housing ministry had given a Jewish settler, Ateret Cohanim, funds to buy the houses. Some of the houses may also have been held by the government under a law that allows it to confiscate the property of those who were absent when Israel occupied the area. Owners are not allowed to return. Critics say the housing ministry and Ateret Cohanim plan to establish thousands of Jewish homes in East Jerusalem, with the aim of surrounding Arab enclaves and forcing Palestinians out. Israeli police opposed the seizure of the houses near Jerusalem's walled Old City on the grounds that they could not protect Jews in Silwan, home to

30,000 Palestinians. Mr. Sharon contended the Jewish presence would improve security. With approval of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, police let settlers and four far-right members of Israel's parliament stay in one house. Israel's attorney general is not expected to rule on the "legality" of the take-over until after the Baker visit. Police questioned six Arabs suspected of trying to poison an Israeli government minister involved in the controversial attempt. But an initial check showed the suspicious substance was soap, police said Sunday. Deputy Science Minister Geula Cohen, 65, a member of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya party, was taken to hospital on Thursday after injuring her leg at a house she occupied with the Jewish settlers. "There are signs that there was apparently an attempt here to poison or harm... Geula Cohen at the hospital and the matter is being checked," Police Minister Ronni Milo told Israel Radio early Sunday. Police later said yellowish substances found by Mrs. Cohen's private body guard in her hospital room Saturday night was apparently ooo-poisonous disinfectant.

Saudi demand for offensive ability said to stall U.S. talks

NEW YORK (Agencies) — U.S. negotiations with Saudi Arabia over a Gulf security alliance are deadlocked over the future size and strength of the Saudi armed forces, the New York Times said Sunday. It quoted U.S. and allied officials as saying the Saudis wanted to supplement their advanced air defence system with an offensive army capable of large-scale, mobile warfare like that demonstrated by the allies in the war against Iraq. In a report from Washington, the newspaper said such a transformation would require a massive infusion of American weaponry and training, which would alter the military balance in the Middle East and lead to a bruising dispute with Israel. The Bush administration and Saudi officials have sought to play down the row, the New York Times said, and a number of experts insist the close wartime relationship remains strong, with both sides committed to protecting the vast Saudi oil reserves and limiting the regional power of Iran and Iraq. But the officials say the post-Gulf war demands on both sides have significantly strained the relationship and all but frozen the plan to provide credible deterrent forces on the Arabian Peninsula, the newspaper said. It said the issue was being handled with extreme delicacy because the United States is counting on the Saudis to play a visible role in promoting a Middle East peace conference. The newspaper reported that the Defence Department had sought administration support for a plan that included pre-positioning enough American armour to equip 150,000 troops and the logistical organisation needed to move them. But it said the plan was scaled back dramatically after the State Department argued that this would effectively turn Saudi Arabia into an American military base. Officials of the Bush administration were not immediately available in Washington to comment on the New York Times report. Iranian approach Iranian officials will meet with their Gulf Arab neighbours in March to discuss bettering their already fast-improving ties, Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati was quoted Sunday as saying. The English-language Tehran Times, which interviewed Mr. Besharati, also quoted him as saying relations with Saudi Arabia are better than they have been in two decades. In excerpts of the interview carried by the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), he gave no further details on the venue or participants in the meeting next year. Mr. Besharati pointed out that Iranian officials met last month in New York with their counterparts of the Gulf Cooperation Council, an alliance of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar.

U.N. envoy begins fresh Mideast hostage mission

LARNACA, Cyprus (Agencies) — A United Nations envoy who has been negotiating a Middle East prisoner swap that would free Lebanon's Western hostages arrived in Cyprus Sunday saying he is on his way to Damascus. U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's special envoy, Giadomeneo Picco, visited Syria and Lebanon to negotiate the release of the last three Western hostages — Britons John McCarthy and Jack Mann, and American Edward Tracy. Mr. Picco told reporters on his arrival from New York that he is trying to fly on to Syria, which has been playing a major role in trying to free up to nine Western hostages still held in Lebanon. The United Nations is trying to broker an exchange of the Western hostages and six Israeli servicemen missing or held captive in Lebanon for Arab prisoners held by Israel. Israel earlier this month suspended Arab prisoner releases, a condition for freeing more Western hostages. It asked for more information on six missing Israeli servicemen and eight soldiers from the South Lebanon Army (SLA) that controls Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon. Mr. Picco, in the last two weeks, had conferred with both Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and Israel's chief hostage negotiator, Uri Lubrani, during the U.N. General Assembly session, sources said. Israel freed 51 Arabs and handed over the remains of nine guerrillas on Sept. 11 after receiving

Saddam says Iraq can survive 20 years

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, saying Iraq could survive 20 years under economic sanctions, Sunday called on Arab people to press their leaders to lift the embargo. President Saddam, receiving participants in a conference of Arab friends in Baghdad, said all Arab and Islamic countries should call for lifting the sanctions, the Iraqi News Agency reported. They were imposed after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait and have remained in effect in an effort to push President Saddam from power. The United Nations has authorized a one-time sale of \$1.6 billion of oil under strict supervision by the embargo committee that would channel the funds to humanitarian needs and reparations. Iraq has so far spurned the offer. "Let it be clear to you... Iraq can live under the siege for 20 years without asking anything from anybody," INA quoted President Saddam as saying. But he also called on all Arab and Islamic peoples to go to their rulers and demand that the sanctions be lifted. "The calls for ending the sanctions should begin within the Arab and Islamic countries themselves. Let every citizen in that country demand that the siege against Iraq be ended," he was quoted as saying. "The appeals should not be directed to the United Nations, but the Arab rulers," he said. He also lashed out at the Arab leaders that supported the U.S.-led coalition forces against Iraq, emphasizing that they were the cause of Iraq's defeat. "Had Arab lands and Arab waters not been put at his disposal as an arena for the operations, he wouldn't have dared fire the first shell against Arabs and Muslims," the president said. He said the Iraqis were still proud of the war, which ended last February. "Your brethren in Iraq made great sacrifices, but they regret nothing because they believe in their struggle," he told the Arab delegates, according to the INA report.

information that one of its missing soldiers was dead. Five Americans, two Germans and a British remain in the hands of pro-Iranian groups in Lebanon. An Iranian newspaper announced Sunday that a Western hostage being held in South Lebanon, possibly an American, would be released soon. The English-language Tehran Times, in a story for Monday's edition, quoted its correspondent in south Beirut as saying that a Western hostage would be free soon. The warren of neighbourhoods of south Beirut holds the headquarters and most of the missing Westerners. The paper has a fairly strong record on predicting hostage releases, although a similar report two weeks ago proved to be false. It often reflects the views of President Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is sometimes at odds with the Iranian-influenced groups in Lebanon. In his complex negotiations with various volatile groups, Mr. Picco is expected to meet with Israeli, Iranian and representatives of the factions holding hostages in Lebanon. Senior Iranian officials and others have predicted that all the hostages on all sides should be freed before the end of the year, starting with August release of Briton John McCarthy and American Edward Tracy. (Continued on page 5)

Peace group goes to court to halt Israeli settlements

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's leading peace group Sunday challenged the government's drive to settle Jews in the occupied Arab territories in the first court test of a policy which Washington views as an obstacle to Middle East peace.

The non-partisan Peace Now Movement asked Israel's supreme court to order a freeze on settlement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip until the court hears the case at a later date.

The suit names Housing Minister Ariel Sharon as a defendant for leading a campaign to accelerate settlement in the occupied territories.

"We are challenging the legality of settlements in the occupied territories, saying basically that the use of state land, which is Jordanian land, to set up settlements is illegal according to customary international law," Peace Now attorney Avigdor Feldman said after delivering a 60-page petition.

Israel controls about 60 per cent of the land in the occupied territories.

Peace Now says it is the first time anyone has challenged the legality of Israel's overall settlement policy. Palestinians have previously petitioned the court over specific lands confiscated to build settlements.

"We are saying the settlement projects create two societies, living one beside the other — one democratic with full political and civil rights and the other society, which is local people, deprived of any right," Mr. Feldman said.

About 100,000 Jews already live in fortified enclaves among nearly two million Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Peace Now says Mr. Sharon, a fierce foe of U.S. peace plans in the hardline cabinet of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, hopes to double the Jewish population by next year.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, trying to clinch Arab-Israeli agreement to attend a peace conference, has said there is no greater obstacle than settlements.

Mr. Shamir, opposed to U.S. demands to be trade land for peace, has repeatedly vowed to keep building.

"This declaration is blatantly contrary to international law," Mr. Feldman countered.

Peace Now cites international law set at the Fourth Hague Convention in 1907 which it says dictates that Israel, as an occupying power, maintain the status quo in the occupied area.

The petition says Israel can legally make changes in the occupied territories only to ensure its security or improve conditions for the local population.

"No settlement is being decided by the security branch of the government. They are not being decided by the defence minister or the army. They are being decided by civil agencies, like Ariel Sharon's, the housing minister," Mr. Feldman said.

The petition says Israel violated international law by offering incentives to Jews who move there, building houses and roads for settlers and exploiting local natural resources.

It accuses Israel of creating a dual legal system by granting settlers rights equal to those of Israeli citizens while stripping Arabs of all civil and political rights.

Qatar given till February to make case over islands

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

AMMAN — Even if progress is made at a Middle East conference towards Arab-Israeli peace, competition for the waters of the Jordan, the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers could keep the region unstable for years to come, analysts say.

Without a peace agreement, unilateral action by the countries which control the rivers will add to tension as populations rise and water demand increases, they say.

The water issue is written into the terms of reference of the peace conference which U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is promoting on his eighth Middle East shuttle starting on Sunday.

It may prove its undoing if there is no agreement on a water share-out.

The three rivers, meandering lines of life in a region where rainfall and ground water are scarce, are already at the centre of deep Arab suspicions of Israel and Turkey, the countries which dominate the rivers.

A study by one U.N. researcher concluded that without international agreements on water-sharing, nations which do not think they are receiving their fair share could go to war.

Syria has effectively served notice that there is little hope of progress on water without a comprehensive peace.

Turkey, where the Tigris and the Euphrates rise, this week said it was postponing a major water conference three years in the planning to avoid disturbing the U.S. attempt to arrange the Arab-Israeli

peace talks this month.

"We will probably wait for a more opportune time," said Oktay Aksoy, Turkey's ambassador to Jordan.

Political sources said the conference was postponed because some Arab states, led by Syria, objected to Israel attending. Diplomats said Turkey, which holds the upper hand, is in no hurry to confront the problem.

A senior U.S. State Department official confirmed that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad told Mr. Baker last month he had serious problems discussing regional issues while Syria and Israel are still formally in a state of war.

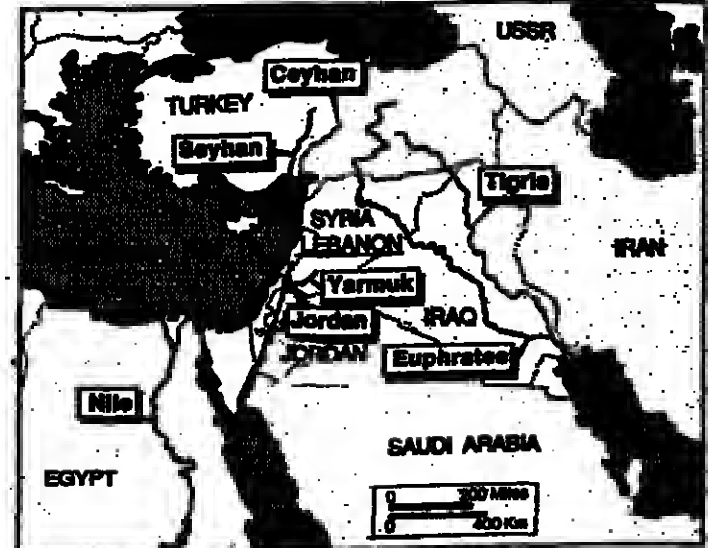
Mr. Baker has been trying to line up multilateral talks on regional issues at the peace conference as a way of demonstrating Arab willingness to deal with Israel.

But water security could become a nightmare in negotiating an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Israel depends on underground water from the occupied West Bank, where Palestinians are given limited access to the resource, to supply its own citizens.

Israel has also been accused of siphoning water from the Litani River in South Lebanon into northern Galilee.

"The situation in the Middle East will remain explosive as long as Israel continues to occupy Arab land and ground and surface water," wrote former Arab League Secretary General Mahmoud Riad in London's Al Hayat newspaper this week.



Mr. Riad said the league has called for a meeting of its members on the states to set aside the Palestinian problem and deal with Israel so Ankara could profit from water sales.

Turkey last year demonstrated it could turn off the taps on the Euphrates to Syria and Iraq downstream when it reduced the flow to fill the reservoir behind the new Ataturk Dam.

Ankara says it compensated for the lost water but its unilateral action highlighted the need for agreements on managing the river system in the divided region.

Turkey's plan to build a huge "peace pipeline" to pump up to seven million cubic metres a day of excess water from two southern rivers through to the Gulf has also aroused some Arab suspicion.

"This is international tampering with the Arab Nation," said Mr. Riad, a former Egyptian foreign minister. He urged Arab countries to reject the pipeline.

After Baghdad invaded Kuwait last year, a leading American newspaper suggested using water to bring Iraq to its knees.

"A water cut-off is really no more or less ethical than the U.N. supervised food embargo," the New York Times argued. "A cut-off could be calibrated to allow the bare minimum necessary for humanitarian aims."

Most of the countries in the region already have severe water shortages. The water tables are falling and the countries in the Gulf have to desalinate sea water at great expense to supply the needs of rapidly growing cities.

Rainfall in the region has recovered since a severe drought two years ago but some reservoirs have been drawn down so deeply that seeping salt water has contaminated them.

King Fahd seen seeking to placate Saudi women punished for driving

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has ordered that passports be returned to the women who defied a ban on driving cars last year, travellers from the kingdom said.

The king also ordered financial compensation for those who lost income as a result of the punishment that followed, said the travellers, who arrived here over the weekend.

The travellers spoke on condition they not be named because the issue is delicate in the conservative kingdom.

"They said the women plan a union form of protest against the Mutawa, Saudi Arabia's powerful religious police."

On Thursday Nov. 7, the approximate anniversary of the drive-in, women — and men who agree with them — plan to stay away from their favourite shopping centres.

"It's a peaceful form of protest where no one can get arrested by the religious police or the traffic police," said one of the travellers. "No one knows who first started the idea, and no one is campaigning. It is just going round."

The Mutawa, estimated at about 90,000, lead Friday prayers where they regularly denounce

women's education, work or driving.

They also patrol shopping centres and other public areas to make sure women dress modestly and enforce a ban on conducting business during Islamic prayers.

Saudi women must be covered from head to toe in all-enveloping black "abayas" and cannot move about unless escorted by a male family member.

Some say the Riyadh "drive-in" by the 40 to 50 women last year shook Saudi society almost as severely as the Iraqi take over of neighbouring Kuwait.

But the travellers said, the king's actions should not be seen as either a concession to liberals or a setback for conservatives.

"We only see it as a gesture from the king because the woman is a 'horma' in our society," said one of them.

Horma is a term meaning women should be, secretly and fondly preserved, including protecting them from evil and the eyes of men who could tempt them into sin.

The defiant drivers were stopped by the Mutawa and escorted to police stations. They were banned from speaking to other, including the press, and their



King Fahd

passports were withdrawn. Some, who were professors at all-female colleges at Riyadh University, were banned from teaching and their paychecks stopped.

The ban on speaking out against the prohibitions remains in force, the travellers said. The Interior Ministry formalised the ban on women driving with an edict and followed it up by banning ownership of cars by women.

Sheik Abdul Aziz Bin Baz, the kingdom's chief Muslim authority, issued an edict saying driving by women was undesirable because it created situations for sinful temptation.

The issue resurfaced when Qatar took the dispute — which centres on Fasht Al Dibal, Jaradah reef, the Hawar Islands and the sea areas controlled by the two states — to the Hague last July.

Bahrain, which has indicated it might be willing to negotiate the territorial sea limits, said the move breached an agreement by both sides to submit the dispute jointly to the International Court.

Qatar says the court is entitled to rule on its application based on agreements reached in December 1987 and December 1990, when it raised the issue at annual GCC summits.

The diplomats say Saudi mediation efforts have made little progress. In December 1987, the two sides initially set a six-month deadline for taking the issue to the Hague if Saudi efforts to resolve the problem failed.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal went to Qatar and Bahrain last month to try to end a tit-for-tat series of accusations since July.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain are all members of the GCC, which also includes Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Kabul government protests to Pakistan over rocket deaths

KABUL (R) — The Afghan government has delivered a strong protest to Pakistan after a guerrilla rocket attack on the eastern city of Jalalabad which killed 17 people.

Kabul Radio said the Foreign Ministry summoned the Pakistani charge d'affaires Saturday to accuse his country of intervening in Afghanistan's 13-year civil war.

The radio said Pakistani troops were directly supporting Afghan guerrilla attacks on the eastern cities of Gardez and Jalalabad.

At least 17 people died and 67 were injured Saturday when guerrillas rocketed Jalalabad on the first day of an offensive against the provincial capital, the Kabul

government said.

Pakistan denies its forces ever operate inside Afghanistan. But it is the main conduit for weapons supplies to the guerrillas, and its intelligence service is deeply involved in Mujahadeen military planning.

Afghan Mujahadeen fighters said in Pakistan they had launched a big artillery attack on Jalalabad in preparation for a ground offensive.

The attack was originally expected to coincide with a rebel assault on Gardez, the home city of Afghan President Najibullah. That attack began late last month but was halted last week by heavy government bombardment.

Pope asks Israel for steps towards diplomatic relations

NATAL, Brazil (R) — Pope John Paul Saturday urged Israel to take steps "to make it easier" for the Vatican to agree to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

But the Pope said Israel should realise that Christians and Muslims also have a spiritual claim to the Holy Land.

The Pope discussed the Middle East and relations with Israel in response to reporters' questions aboard the plane taking him from Rome to Brazil at the start of a 10-day trip to the world's largest Catholic country.

Asked about the lack of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the Jewish state, he said: "I have often said that we want to have these (diplomatic) relations but some problems must be resolved."

"As I once said to an American president, 'yes, we are always willing. But our interlocutors must make it a little easier for us' (to establish diplomatic relations)," he said.

The Pope, who became head of the Catholic Church in 1978, did not say which U.S. president had spoken to him about diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel.

Jews around the world have urged the Pope, often forcefully, to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

They say such a move would help the Middle East peace process by refuting the notion held by some Arabs that Israel was not a permanent entity.

The Vatican recognises Israel's right to exist within secure borders.

But before tying the diplomatic knot with the Jewish state, it wants a solution to the Palestinian question and guarantees

protecting Jerusalem as a city sacred to Christians and Muslims as well as Jews.

Israel, which in 1980 declared Jerusalem its "united and eternal capital," has in the past rejected suggestions that the city be placed under an internationally guaranteed statute.

The Vatican also wants guarantees covering Christian property elsewhere in the Holy Land.

The Pope's words indicated there could be little progress on the issue of diplomatic ties until Israel made some concessions to overcome existing obstacles.

He said the church was also concerned about the effect diplomatic relations with Israel could have on Muslim minorities.

The Pope suggested that Israelis had to be mindful that Muslims and Christians had a spiritual claim to the Holy Land.

"We know well that Palestine, the Holy Land, is a promised land, promised by God to these chosen people of the old covenant (the Biblical Israelites), and through them promised, in a spiritual sense, to all those who are part of the heritage of Abraham ... not just the Jews, but also Christians and Muslims ...," he said.

Speaking of a U.S.-proposed Middle East peace conference, the Pope said: "There are many problems in the Middle East that can be resolved only in a global way, especially the problem of the weakest, in this case the people of Lebanon and the Palestinians ..."

"I am full of admiration for all those efforts being made to reach a peace conference. So far it has not materialised. But let's not lose hope," he added.

U.N. body plans payout to Gulf crisis victims, but coffers empty

GENEVA (R) — In a small villa overlooking Lake Geneva, an embryonic team of international civil servants and diplomats faces a mammoth task — how to compensate more than a million people for what they lost in Iraq's seizure of Kuwait.

Employees of a unique United Nations body, the Compensation Fund, appear to have a job that will take years and could help push the organisation further towards the role some of its founders dreamed of, world government.

But although the administrative wheels are already turning in the Villa la Palouse in the grounds of Geneva's U.N. Palais des Nations, the fund has one major problem. It still has no funds to administer.

Over the next two weeks,

representatives of the 15 countries on the council will be meeting in the Swiss city to discuss further details of how the fund will operate.

"This is uncharted territory. We are doing something the U.N. has never tried before," said Philippe Berg, Belgium's ambassador to the U.N. European headquarters in Geneva and chairman of the fund's governing council.

The U.N. Security Council set up the fund in July to determine how to collect money from Iraq and administer its fair distribution to individuals, businesses and organisations who were hit as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The fund's council has already met twice and agreed the first to be compensated will be the ordinary people — domestic servants, labourers

and other workers mainly from developing countries — who had to flee Kuwait and later Iraq itself.

The Security Council, whose 15 states are also on the fund's council, has decreed money will come from deductions from the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales, banned until now, under U.N. sanctions against Baghdad that followed the Gulf war.

On Sept. 19, the U.N.'s standing body agreed to allow Iraq to sell \$1.6 billion worth of oil under supervision over the next six months to buy food and medicines for its own increasingly impoverished people.

But since then Baghdad has refused to say formally whether it would agree to sell on the U.N. terms, which would bring only some \$933 million into Iraqi coffers

while the rest would go for reparations, mainly to the fund.

Since early October, Iraqi officials have argued they could not agree to pump oil through Turkey, which is asking \$264 million in fees to cover costs in reopening the twin pipeline and operating it for six months.

But diplomats in Geneva say they expect Iraq to drop what they describe as its delaying tactics soon.

"I think the posturing and puffing will not last much longer," said one. Over the coming two weeks, fund sources say, the council will finalise arrangements for compensating people ranging from Filipino maids to Vietnamese building workers who lost everything in their flight from war zones.

The council — where di-

plomats say the "big five" of the United States, the Soviet Union, China, France and Britain have been in almost perfect harmony — has already decided to pay a flat \$2,500 each to the small claimants.

"This may be an arbitrary figure, but it is better than no figure at all and it will make sure that the poorest of the victims are able to start putting their lives together again with some financial resources quickly," said one diplomat.

But the council plans to begin more detailed study of how to handle larger claims of up to \$100,000, of claims from the families of people who died as a result of the Iraqi attack, and of the big claims that could reach millions each.

It will also have to decide which countries will be hand-

led first. Kuwait, which calculates its losses as running into many billions of dollars, argues that it should come top of the list for compensation, diplomats say.

The council will also study the mechanisms that must be finalised to monitor Iraq's oil sales, when they start.

Already two Norwegian oil firms have agreed to U.N. proposals to check oil quality and volume on site in Iraq to help ensure there is no cheating. Proceeds of sales will be paid into a U.N. escrow account in New York.

"We are getting into the kind of administration that would have been unthinkable before the end of the cold war," said one diplomat. "It is giving the U.N. the type of experience it will need to develop into a real world authority with muscle."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

08:00 Bing
08:30 News in French
09:15 Weekly Sports Magazine
09:30 News in Hebrew
09:40 News in Arabic
10:30 Hey Dad
11:00 The Midas Touch
11:30 News in English
12:30 Gabriela Fire

PRAYER TIMES

06:17 Fajr
05:34 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:22 Dhuhr
15:27 'Asr
17:10 Maghreb
18:27 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terremata Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be dusty and partly cloudy to cloudy and scattered showers of rain are expected. Winds will be easterly moderate to fresh. In Agaba, winds will be northerly fresh and seas choppy.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 18 / 25

Agaba 22 / 33

Decais 16 / 27

Jordan Valley 20 / 24

Yesterday's high temperature: Am-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Adnan Zughoul 898140

Dr. Ghaleb Zaidi 76123

Dr. Basim Oudim 648024

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayem 620115

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Ansa pharmacy 637055

Natash pharmacy 626072

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shawstai pharmacy 637660

IRBID:

Dr. Ayman Abdul Halja (-)

Al Shams pharmacy 273625

ZARQA:

Dr. Tarq Hijawi (-)

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 77121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 635900

Priest Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 781111

Telephone Information 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 661101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

HOSPITALS

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

Company 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:

Hammam Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2

Abdel Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2

Malwa, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shamsi 6641714

Shamsi Hospital 669131

University Hospital 843845

Al-Musht

Jordan, Sudan set \$80 million as target for trade exchanges

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Sudan have agreed to boost trade to a level of \$80 million and to undertake other steps that would boost economic cooperation in a number of fields.

The agreement was contained in the minutes of deliberations signed Sunday by the heads of the Jordanian and Sudanese teams which have been holding negotiations on trade and economic matters over the past few days in Amman.

The minutes, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, cover cooperation in the fields of transportation, joint ventures, contracting and engineering consultancy operations, exchange of visits by officials and experts and exchange of information on the part of the private sectors in the two countries.

According to the minutes, Sudan and Jordan will exchange products estimated at \$80 million annually, to be divided equally between them. It said that \$70 million worth of products will be exchanged within regular trading transactions while \$10 million will be allocated to the Sudanese and Jordanian trade centres in Amman and Khartoum. Another \$4 million will be earmarked for trade fairs which will be organised in the two capitals to promote the sale of Jordanian and Sudanese national products.

The two sides agreed to launch joint ventures and announced that a Jordanian delegation will shortly visit Sudan to explore the possibilities



Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb and his Sudanese counterpart sign trade agreement (Petra photo)

ties of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of agriculture, medicine and industry. Jordan agreed to offer technical training in agricultural fields to Sudanese technicians and workers and will provide Sudan with fruit tree-saplings and equipment for drip irrigation and plasticulture, according to the statement.

The statement added that Sudan will provide Jordan with its requirements of meat through arrangements to be conducted by specialised teams from the two countries.

In addition, a group of

Jordanian contractors and engineering consultants will soon make a trip to Sudan to study prospects for cooperation in contracting and construction work, the two sides said.

They added that a group of Jordanian businessmen will visit Khartoum in order to identify areas for prospective investments and for launching joint economic ventures.

The two sides will exchange visits by experts, officials and others to promote bilateral cooperation particularly in trade and industry.

Sudan also agreed to give facilities to Jordanian products to find their way to African

countries through Sudanese ports, the statement said.

The minutes were signed by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb and the visiting Sudanese Minister of Trade, Cooperation and Supply Dr. Ibrahim Obeidallah.

Following the signing ceremony, Mr. Abul Ragheb expressed hope that the agreement would promote economic and trade ties between the Sudanese and Jordanian people.

Later, the Sudanese delegation left for home and was seen off by Mr. Abul Ragheb and other officials.

King's speech hailed as reaffirmation of Jordan's commitment to Palestinians

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanians from all walks of life Sunday voiced full support for His Majesty King Hussein's announcement about Jordan's acceptance of the U.S.-peace initiative and the general principles on which the peace process will be based.

Interviews conducted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reflected full backing to the King's idea of joining the peace process in order to provide protection for the Jordanian and Palestinian people for the present and the future, to put an end to the continuous drain on national resources and to provide support for the Palestinian people.

The King's nationwide address outlined Jordan's endeavours since 1967 to achieve peace based on justice and the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 said Senate mem-

ber and former Prime Minister Bahjat Al Talhouni.

"I believe that the King's ideas reflect the inner feelings of his people who yearn for peace and the restoration of Palestinian people's rights," Mr. Talhouni said.

Head of the Constitutional Bloc at the Lower House of Parliament Thouqan A Hindawi said that the world order makes it incumbent on the Arab Nation to take into account the changes and the developments worldwide.

Mr. Hindawi said that negotiations constitute an important weapon in confronting the enemy like battles in wars. The King's speech, he added, stressed the need for a settlement to be based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the return of usurped Arab lands to their rightful owners.

The coming negotiations will serve as an arena for a battle for peace and not for capitulation, said Parliament member Mohammad Abu Alim. He said that the Arabs in general and Jordan in particular should seize the opportunity to exert pressure on Israel to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Refraining from participation, he added, means giving the Israelis the chance to bring in more immigrants and to further swallow Arab land.

Latin Bishop in Amman Salim Al Sayegh came out strongly in favour of the King's announcement and said that the King's endeavours are clearly designed to help the Palestinian people. The peace process is aimed at regaining their rights and can by no means be a capitulation or

selling out of the legitimate Arab rights in Palestine, the bishop said.

The heads of the Christian communities in Jordan, Bishop Sayegh added, support the dialogue and reason and oppose the use of force. They also support King Hussein's drive to regain Arab rights by peaceful means.

Economist Fahd Al Panek said that the King's address was an embodiment of reason and objectivity and realism. Jordan is facing new realities and new situations and has no alternative but to interact with the developments and strive to achieve peace.

He said that the Jordanian delegation will not be negotiating for the Palestinians but rather on matters that would ensure protection of Jordan's national rights.

Country's unemployment rate rises to 22.9 per cent

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The unemployment rate has risen to 22.9 per cent of Jordan's national workforce, according to official figures, but economists and analysts believe that the actual figure, including those unregistered with the authorities, closer to 35 per cent.

According to the latest quarterly report by the Department of Statistics, 120,000 of Jordan's 524,197-strong workforce are employed.

About half of the unemployed are returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf states, according to the report, which adds that the Civil Service Commission — the authority in charge of government jobs — received 55,000 job applications between March and September this year.

The report did not provide figures of jobs offered through the commission, but in view of

the government freeze on new jobs in the public sector, the number of new civil servants is believed to have gone up by less than 2,500 in 1991. No new jobs will be offered in the public sector this year and provisions for fresh government posts is expected to be very limited in the 1992 fiscal budget.

Analysts noted that the report from the Department of Statistics does not include those who might not have approached any official body for employment, including the recruitment office of the Ministry of Labour, which channels applicants to private sector opportunities.

The analysts estimate that 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the unemployed are not registered with the authorities, and thus the actual joblessness rate in the Kingdom could be closer to 35 per cent.

Preliminary studies have found that over 40 per cent of

the 230,000 returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf states are below 15 years of age, thus not part of the workforce. At the same time, economists also point out, they have added demands on the Kingdom's infrastructure and basic services.

Close to 40 per cent of the 13,000 expatriates who returned home between Aug. 10 and Aug. 31 joined the ranks of the unemployed, further underlining the pattern.

Officials say that the number of returnees could be nearer to 400,000 before the end of the year as hardships and denial of employment in Kuwait take their toll on those who have opted to remain in the post-war emirate.

The latest report found 259,400 people (49.5 per cent of the total workforce) were employed in the service and management sector, while the industrial sector accounted for 53,400 people (10.2 per cent of the workforce).

According to United Nations experts who have been monitoring the influx and volunteers helping the returnees, most of the expatriates who have returned from Kuwait were holding low-paying jobs with little or almost no savings. Most of them are hopeful that they could receive compensation as decided by the United Nations, which has set up a fund for war reparations for victims of the Gulf crisis.

"We estimate that 35 per cent of the returnees brought in very little liquidity with them," said an official of a voluntary body. "Most of them have to find immediate jobs to support their families."

U.N. experts say that one of the solutions, which is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour, is limiting the number of foreign workers in Jordan, estimated to be between 150,000 to 150,000.

Group urges survey of health situation within the Mediterranean basin

AMMAN (J.T.) — A meeting by the World Health Organisation (WHO) regional Mediterranean Committee, which ended last week in Tunis, has appealed to the world community to offer assistance to countries worst affected by the Gulf crisis and urged the WHO to conduct an assessment of the health situation within the Mediterranean region, particularly Jordan, according to Health Minister Mamdouh Al Abbadi.

The committee also called on the WHO to coordinate matters with various agencies operating in the region to raise necessary funds to offer Jordan assistance to deal with the consequences of the Gulf war, said the minister upon returning to Amman from the Tunis meeting.

The week-long meeting discussed the situation in Iraq and urged all WHO members and the United Nations to make arrangements enabling the Iraqi people to acquire medicines and medical equipment. It also requested that health assistance be provided to the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab lands, the minister said.

Dr. Abbadi, who led Jordan's delegation to the meetings attended by Arab health ministers, said that the participants discussed the general health conditions in the Arab area and expressed solidarity with Jordan in its drive to provide health services to the influx of expatriates and other refugees flooding the Kingdom from Kuwait and the Gulf region.

EC calls for confidence building measures to promote 'right climate' for proposed Middle East peace conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the eve of the arrival in Jordan by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who is on his eighth tour of the region, to promote the Middle East peace process, the European Community (EC) office in Amman issued a statement voicing full support for the peace initiative.

The statement said that the EC attaches great importance to confidence-building measures designed to create the appropriate climate for successful negotiations.

Following is the press statement which was issued Sunday: The Community and its Member States reaffirm their full support for the Middle East peace initiative promoted by the United States and the USSR. They welcome the agreement in principle of all the parties to the dispute to the approach proposed by the

U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Baker. In this respect they also welcome the positive attitude of the Palestine National Council. They hope that this emerging consensus will open the way to an early resolution of the problem of an authentic Palestinian representation. They do not believe that any formula on this issue can be held to prejudice negotiations on substantive issues such as the status of Jerusalem.

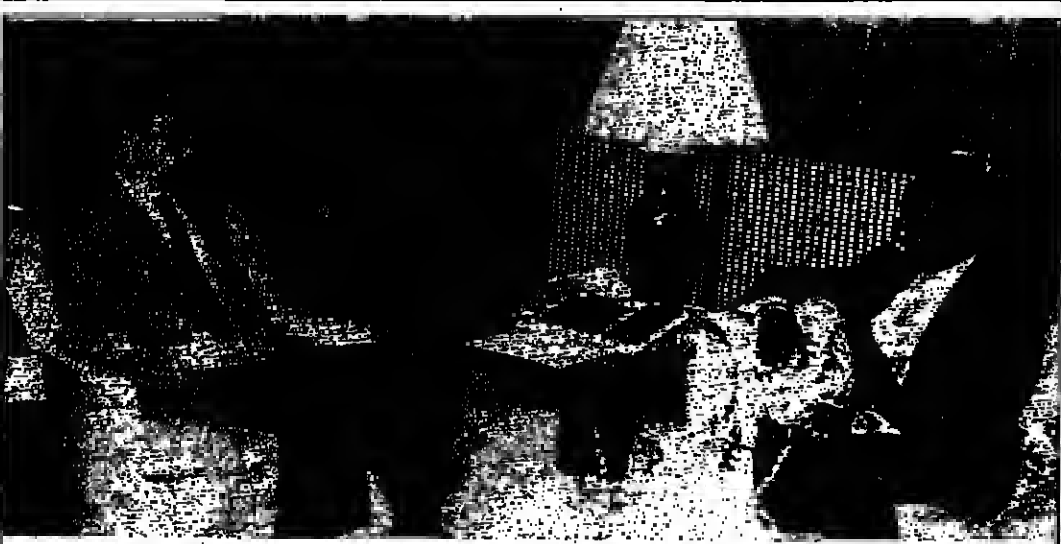
The Community and its Member States continue to attach importance to the adoption by both sides of confidence-building measures designed to create the right climate for successful negotiations. They underline the importance they attach to a suspension of Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, and welcome the willingness of Arab states to

freeze the trade boycott of Israel in return for this.

They reaffirm their strong disapproval of the "Zionism is Racism" Resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly which they believe should be consigned to oblivion.

While reaffirming their well-known positions of principle, the Community and its Member States confirm their determination to give all possible support to efforts to convene a Middle East Peace Conference and their determination to play an active role as a full participant in such a Conference alongside the co-sponsors.

They believe that an unprecedented opportunity to create peace between Israel and the Arabs now exists and they call on all parties to show the flexibility and imagination necessary to grasp this.



HIGH LEVEL MEETING: Prime Minister Taher Masi Sunday received Senegalese Communications Minister Makhoul Kane, who delivered to him a message from Senegalese President Abdo Diouf to His Majesty King Hussein. Mr. Masi and Mr.

Kane discussed ways of promoting cooperation between Jordan and Senegal in various fields. The Senegalese minister arrived in Amman earlier Sunday and was received at the airport by Transport and Communications Minister Ali Subeimat.

King congratulates Yemen

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh congratulating him on the 14th October Revolution

Anniversary. The King wished President Ali continued good health and happiness and the Yemeni people further progress and prosperity.

Office Building For Rent

Commercial office building for rent. Consists of 3 storeys, each of 400 square metres in area. Two storeys are divided into two sections and the third one is undivided section; with a lift, central heating, and separate water and electricity meters. Ideal for large companies and banks. Could be rented each floor separately or preferably as a whole.

Location: Dahyat Al Rabia over Al Rabia Bakery, Al Qabas Bookstore and Amra Supermarket.

For details please contact Al Qabas Bookstore, the same building, tel. 678581

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Abdul Rauf Shamsoun, Khalid Jirees and Mohammad Hussein Abdullah at Abdul Hameed Shamsoun Foundation Gallery (Open 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.)
- ★ Comprehensive book exhibition at Yarmouk University.
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artists Ismael Khayyat, Mohammad Abdullah, Khater Mohammad, Ali Mandawil, Khalid Wali and Hameed Ali at Baladna Art Gallery (located at the beginning of Gardens Street from Safeway).
- ★ Art exhibition by Hazem Al Bustani at Alla Art Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Mohammad Al Jalous at the French Cultural Centre.

FILMS

- ★ French film entitled "Les Cousins" at the French Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.
- ★ Mozart opera film entitled "Die Hochzeit des Figaro" at Goethe Institute — 7 p.m.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

محكمة تحرير يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة منشورة بالانجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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Siege mentality vs. peace

WHILE THE speech of His Majesty the King on Saturday was directed mainly to the Jordanian people, it was also bound to be heard by other peoples and governments in this region, the Arab World and the international community at large. The Israelis in particular should have seen in the King's words a landmark declaration of Jordan's unwavering commitment to a negotiated peace settlement and to lasting coexistence between our two peoples after decades of war, bloodshed and hatred.

Also, there are Israelis who are neither interested in peace nor willing to hear the voice of reason. It was no coincidence therefore that some state-controlled media organs in the Jewish state, most probably prodded by their Likud leadership, chose to take excerpts out of context from the King's speech only to beam to their viewers totally distorted. Take for instance those comments that His Majesty made about the need to involve the international community in the search for peace. While some Israelis chose to emphasize the King's statement that it was no longer a conflict between Arabs and Israel but a conflict between the international community and Israel, the Israeli media generally ignored the Monarch's pointed appeals for a new era in regional relations. Needless to say, the Israeli media were only further serving the carefully orchestrated campaign of the Israeli right-wing leadership to strengthen the siege mentality among the Israeli public.

Notwithstanding the campaign of the extremists in Israel to tell their people that their Arab neighbours are not genuine in their search for peace, it should be noted that the King's emphatic appeal to break new ground in the quest for stability and security for everyone in the region has come along with pointed references to the new realities which the people of the Middle East have no choice but to accept. At the same time, the Israelis — or those who had the opportunity to hear the King in full — should realise that peace is a way of life that Jordan has chosen to accept and not a tactic or trick.

It goes without saying that if there has to be genuine peace based on fairness and justice in this part of the world, the Israeli public has to assume the leading role by recognising the spirit in which the King told his people that genuine peace is something that concerns every aspect of not only their life but also that of future generations.

In the same vein, the Jordanian people have the responsibility not to undermine the increasing awareness of the Israeli people that fair and just peace is what everyone in the region needs, and that being stubborn and intransigent only serves to breed more tension and greater mistrust. Extremist positions on either side of the fence have to be abandoned and realism should be the guiding force that should see us through to the cherished goal of justice, fairness, peace, stability, security and coexistence.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Sunday described His Majesty King Hussein's address to the national congress as brave and comprehensive, placing all the facts before his people. There is no doubt that the King's candid talk with the representatives of the Jordanian people as well as the leader's determination to pursue shouldering responsibilities despite the numerous odds will encourage the Jordanian people to enhance their endeavours towards attaining their aspirations through peace and stability that are bound to reign in the region, the paper noted. The whole world wants peace and the whole world realises that it is Israel which continues to reject peace based on international legitimacy, the paper pointed out. The sole basis for peace will be U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which means exchanging land for peace and this is a concept not only for the Arabs but also for the world community which backs a peaceful settlement, the paper added. The Arabs, as the King said, should not escape from shouldering responsibility towards the coming generations and should take a brave step to end the tragedy that had befallen the Palestinian people, the paper continued. The paper said that through national unity and wise policies, the Jordanian people can deal objectively with the challenges facing their country and safeguard Arab national interests.

Israel's latest illegal actions in Silwan, in the Jerusalem area, its continued provocations against the Palestinian people elsewhere and its leaders' statements opposing the U.S. peace plan are obvious manifestations of the Jewish state's intention to derail U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's fresh tour in the region, said a columnist in Al Ra'i daily Sunday. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the series of anti-peace actions committed by Israel came on the eve of Mr. Baker's tour which begins Sunday with a visit to Egypt and which is designed to put the finishing touches to arrangements for a peace parity. The writer said that Israel's non-stop drive to build more and more settlements, especially in the city of Jerusalem and its suburbs, and its continued repressive measures against the Palestinians and their intifada are clear signs of the Israeli government's defiance of the world community and U.N. Security Council resolutions. The writer said the responsibility for peace and forcing Israel to comply with the requirements of international legitimacy now lies squarely with Washington and Moscow, the co-sponsors of the coming peace conference. He said that the United States is quite capable of exerting pressure worldwide and can do that on Israel if it is really interested in laying the foundation of a lasting peace and a new world order dominated by justice.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Masri entitled to benefit of the doubt

Prime Minister Taher Masri is in the unenviable position of having to sue for peace on behalf of Jordan. It is admittedly an awesome responsibility that many "brave" statesmen would rather shun than shoulder, not only at this difficult time but at any other time for that matter. Yet the prime minister is never left a moment of peace to carry out this mission and is constantly bombarded with hardships, both real and imaginary, by one parliamentarian or another.

It is axiomatic that it is infinitely easier and less brave to shy away from waging peace with Israel, especially under unfavourable conditions. Those of us who would rather opt for status quo under the banner of "false nationalism" can afford to sit back behind our desks or in our living rooms and theorise academically on whether Jordan should join the bandwagon of fledgling peace in the region. By and large such theoreticians have nothing to lose and everything to gain by staying aloof from the risky endeavour of trying to extricate something tangible from Israel under circumstances that admittedly are not favourable to the overall Arab cause.

The prime minister, on the other hand, has dared call Israel's bluff by accepting to engage it in serious negotiations to probe its true intentions and then allow the people of the country an

opportunity to pronounce themselves on the results of the many rounds of bargaining with the enemy. I wonder how many Jordanian statesmen would dare assume this awesome responsibility. Masri, therefore, is entitled to our benefit of the doubt if not our outright sympathy and support. Yet the Jordanian political scene is fast becoming hostile to the prime minister before he even has an opportunity to prove himself with regard to the emotionally laden peace process.

I say give the man a chance and pray for his success. The road before the country is arduous and tortuous and few of us would have the courage to explore it much less open it and pave it till the bitter end. If the prime minister gambles on peace on behalf of all of us and loses, he would be burned up politically. Meanwhile, the rest of us would just sit tight and capitalise on his failure by saying "I told you so." Yet it would be better to gamble on peace and lose rather than not trying at all and continue to stew in the juices of status quo that may offer nothing but chronic misery and false hopes.

Instead of proliferating premature pessimism, Jordanian political leaders had better be advised to develop a wait and see position till the entire peace exercise comes to fruition or declare its bankruptcy. At least by then we would have had the peace of mind and the clear consciousness of having tried and failed.

Alongside such a posture I personally like the idea of forming a shadow government, composed of all the opposing parliamentary blocs, which can be expected to serve as a watchdog over the policy decisions of the incumbent government. Such an informal shadow government would be headed by the leader of the strongest parliamentary political party that sits on the other side of the fence from the current government. All members of the Parliament would have a chance to have their say on the peace process, at every juncture, by offering viable alternatives and wise counsel.

But meantime, the Cabinet of Taher Masri deserves every support it can muster till it is proven wrong. All leading parliamentary leaders and their constituencies are likewise called upon to reflect rationally on alternative courses that the country can take vis-a-vis the U.S.-brokered peace process. Above all, they can be asked to take stock of the regional and international scene and act accordingly. Saloon fabricated panacea can no longer do and the people of Jordan are entitled to a sober assessment of what their country can do to promote the chances of a just and durable peace in the region. The bottom line is that status quo is no more tenable. The Arab masses are tired of status quo and are demanding a move; hopefully it is in the direction of a better future.

Western aid for the Soviets still coming

By Mark Fritz
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — The bite is back in the Moscow air, the days are getting darker sooner and the thoughts of pensioners naturally turn to tonight's meal.

With another hard winter hurtling toward the Soviet Union, plane loads of Western food also are on the way.

"What food?" asked Zinaida Suchkova, shaking an empty paper bag she brought out of an almost empty store on a crowded street in this crowded, cranky town. "I keep hearing about the Western food, but I never see it."

Mrs. Suchkova, 57, gets a 100-ruble pension each month, the amount a tourist receives upon changing \$3 at the Moscow Airport. Her deaf, disabled husband gets 132 rubles.

Every kopeck goes to finance her perpetual shopping forays. There is no money left to replace the ratty brown coat she wears or buy the 250-ruble bible she wants.

"For dinner I'm eating bread tonight," she shouted, drawing stares near the cabbage stand outside the state-run store. "The Communist Party gets it all."

Identifying the people who need relief and surmounting the red tape that can tie it up — or the corruption that can divert it — are tasks facing myriad nations, relief agencies and churches gearing up for the second annual feed-the-Soviets drive.

The European Community says it will contribute \$2.4 billion in relief. The United States and other industrial nations are ready to follow suit.

The Soviet Union pulls at so many heartstrings these days that last year, even poor India sent 25 tonnes of powdered milk, jam, instant soup, canned vegetables and medical supplies.

In the last 12 months, the Soviet Union received nearly 310,000 tonnes of food, clothing

and medical supplies, according to its own figures.

About 265,000 tonnes came from Germany, which keeps thanking the Kremlin for allowing its reunification. The United States sent 730 tonnes. The little island of Malta sent 39 kilograms.

"We expect even more this winter," said Dr. Andrei Kiselev, chairman of the Russian Foundation for Social and Health Assistance and a member of the World Health Organisation's Emergency Relief Board.

Mr. Kiselev, who coordinates relief aid for the Russian Republic, anticipates fewer amateur participants than last year, when saving the Soviets was very chic.

"They wanted limousines, they

wanted to meet the big names," he said. "They didn't care where their aid went. They just wanted to tell their friends."

Some governments believe the Soviets overstate their needs. There is plenty of food, but also much evidence that affordable essentials are increasingly beyond the reach of average households. Republics are reluctant to send products beyond their borders. Farms are reluctant to feed a state distribution system when they can profit more from the open market.

People like Labov Gormarova, 65, one of Russia's 26 million pensioners, say they can only shop in the state stores or borrow from relatives.

"My pension would not last a

week in a private market," she said.

Quality is better in private markets, but common foods like tomatoes, cabbage and eggs can cost 10 to 15 times the price at a state store, when it has them.

In July, Mr. Kiselev said, 108 million of the republic's 148.7 million people were living below a "poverty line" of 290 rubles a month. President Mikhail S. Gorbachev is trying to seal economic agreements that would make sure republics distribute their food evenly.

Edward Madigan, the U.S. agriculture secretary, just completed a week-long mission to see how badly the Soviet food production, processing and distribution system is crumbling.

Mr. Madigan said he doesn't think there will be famine this year, but he expects shortages of some essentials.

Besides food, much of the humanitarian aid this winter will be medicine. The Soviet Union imported about half its pharmaceuticals trading partners in the former east bloc, which now demand hard currency.

Americans, a medical relief agency based in Stamford, Conn., delivered 1 million pounds of medicine last winter and said pains were taken to make sure it wasn't just unloaded at the state bureaucracy.

"That's asking for trouble," said Ty de Cordova, the agency's director of Soviet relief. "Any-

body who didn't have anybody on site had no way of knowing where it went."

He said Armenia, delivered its materials directly to the republics, and made spot inventory checks at hospitals and orphanages, "but what I can't do is watch every pill being swallowed. I can't prevent a nurse from taking them home to her family."

De Cordova said relief groups learned from the 1988 earthquake in Armenia when some aid meant for the region wound up at a Moscow flea market.

Last year, a truckload of meat from Finland was stopped in a Soviet border town, classified as "poisoned" and confiscated, Finnish media reported.

Private U.S. foundations flew 60 tonnes of food and medicine to Moscow this month and gave 25 per cent to city police in return for help with distribution, said J. Reiff of Free Congress, one of the foundations. He said the effort was organised hastily and the police were enlisted to save time.

An official of a Western relief agency, who insisted on anonymity, said Soviet bureaucrats threatened last year to tie up medical shipments in red tape unless they could control the deliveries.

Mr. Kiselev said the vast majority of shipments get through, and insisted "diversions" in the Russian Republic were few. De Cordova also gives the republics high marks.

Interviews with half a dozen elderly women who receive pensions revealed that only one got Western aid last year.

Maria Rodinova, 67, received a package from Germany filled with jam, meat, fruit, "even salt and sugar," and something very unusual: tea "in little bags."

"We enjoyed it very much," said Mrs. Rodinova, who is back to eating porridge and bread for dinner. "But it didn't last very long."

Gulf states, unable to agree on security, look Westward

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — The Gulf Arab states can't agree on a collective security pact. Some, with mixed feelings, are again looking to the West for protection.

But the Western powers, slimming down their armed forces following the end of the cold war, are reluctant to involve themselves in the costly business of maintaining large numbers of troops in the Gulf.

And anyway, the dangers to the Gulf's oil wealth have receded. The Soviet and Iraqi threats have been eliminated and, in the short term at least, there are no other perceived external threats even if Saddam Hussein rises from the ashes.

Nor do the United States and its allies want to stoke up Islamic and Arab resentment in the region by maintaining large forces there.

Most of the conservative Gulf monarchies, which sit atop 40 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves, also are reluctant to ignite Islamic and nationalist ire.

But in the absence of a regional consensus on security, they don't want to be left exposed.

"Despite all the high-tech weapons they're scrambling to buy, the inescapable fact is that the Gulf states simply are incap-

able of defending themselves," said Veteran Middle East analyst Hans-Heino Kopetz.

The 10-year defence pact with the United States that Kuwait signed last month underlined how Arab efforts to forge their own defence arrangement have crumbled into disarray.

Kuwait, constantly claiming President Saddam still has designs on the emirate, wants the Americans to maintain bases there.

Washington is less than enthusiastic. But it's expected to sign similar, largely symbolic, accords with the other Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Qatar and Bahrain. With Kuwait, they form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Kuwait, its military still disorganised and demoralised, plans further defence pacts with Britain and France, the two main European allies in the U.S.-led coalition that liberated the emirate in February.

French President Francois Mitterrand last month signed a military cooperation accord with the UAE and said Paris was ready for bilateral security arrangements with the other Gulf states.

The Gulf states have never been able to produce a credible regional security agreement among themselves since they

formed the GCC 11 years ago as a defence and economic alliance during the Iran-Iraq war.

Despite the shockwaves of August 1990, they're still pulling in different directions.

The Saudis are planning to spend billions of dollars on high-tech weapons and are talking of tripling the size of their armed forces.

But there are even internal differences in Saudi Arabia, the dominant GCC power, about security structures.

"The government is clearly divided about moving closer to the United States," said Shahrman Chubin of Geneva's Graduate Institute for International Affairs.

"The resignation last month of Prince Khalid, who commanded Arab forces during the war, is very odd and may reflect these differences."

The Saudis overcame their qualms about letting in foreign forces last year when they felt threatened by President Saddam.

But last month, they blocked U.S. moves to deploy an air force fighter wing in the Kingdom to carry out strikes against Iraq if necessary for blocking U.N. teams hunting President Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

That underlined how the Saudis have reverted to their pre-

war policy of fence-sitting and mollifying Islamic sentiment.

Riyadh also sought to avoid antagonising Iran, now the major power in the region following Iraq's defeat.

Despite the recent rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh, the Saudis remain deeply suspicious of Iran as it rebuilds its military following the end of the war with Iraq in 1988.

But, short of a radical takeover in Tehran, Iran "will not be a military threat for some time to come," Mr. Kopetz noted. "They don't have the air power, yet for one thing."

Tehran, which opposes any Western presence in the Gulf, has denounced the Kuwait agreement with Washington.

Iran insists that no Gulf security arrangement will work without it. And despite Saudi reluctance, "it would be lunacy to exclude Iran," Mr. Chubin noted.

Oman has proposed expanding the GCC's Saudi-based 10,000-man peninsula shield rapid deployment force into a 100,000-strong army.

But the plan, like others before it, feel apart because of differences over cost-sharing and command structures.

So did a move to align Egypt and Syria, key Arab components of the wartime coalition, with the

GCC states. Within a week of the war's end, the eight countries announced that they were forming a joint military force.

Egypt was to provide 35,000 troops and Syria 30,000 in return for \$15 billion from the GCC states. But the Gulf states had second thoughts and slashed that to \$5 billion. Egypt and Syria pulled out.

LETTERS

Balanced aid?

To the Editor:

Those embassies in Jordan which from time to time issue press releases about the aid given by their countries to Jordan during the past forty years deserve our thanks.

However, it would be better if those embassies, when they mention the said aid, could give similar details about the aid given to Israel during the said period.

Such information would help in refuting "allegations" that those donor countries deal with different countries in double-standards.

George Khoury,
P.O. Box 17966,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Baker begins new Mideast shuttle

(Continued from page 1)

called the occupation of Arab houses in East Jerusalem the "first dish" the Israelis wanted to give Mr. Baker to deadlock his mission and they are preparing other dishes.

Al Thawra asked: "What kind and colour these dishes will be?" "Israel is ready to create an excess of pretensions to run away from the peace conference," the paper added.

"Israel wants to gain from the pre-peace conference negotiation what it could not gain inside it, since this conference is an international mechanism generated for peace conditions only," it said.

Another newspaper, Al Baath, said Israeli leaders were playing for time in an effort to gain excessive Arab concessions and blackmail the United States and the rest of the world.

Libyan leader Muammar

Qadhafi Sunday received a letter from President Assad on the Middle East peace efforts.

The Libyan News Agency IANA said Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam handed the letter to Col. Qadhafi.

It said the letter covered "developments on the Arab and international levels," and the results of Mr. Assad's meeting with President Mubarak. It gave no other details.

The Egyptian leader has been trying to convince Col. Qadhafi to temper his criticism of U.S. peace proposals since Syria agreed in July to attend the peace conference.

Col. Qadhafi ended a two-day

Sharon visits settlers in Silwan

(Continued from page 1)

hwasling soap. But a police spokeswoman said laboratory tests were incomplete.

Four of the six Arabs worked in the hospital kitchen. The other two delivered food trays.

The radio said a seventh Arab, a caretaker, was detained on suspicion of setting fire to a cardboard box under a fuse box near Ms. Cohen's room.

Ms. Cohen, opposed to U.S. efforts to convene an Arab-Israeli peace conference, was the best-known figure in the group of about 50 armed Jewish settlers who seized the houses in Silwan Wednesday.

Tension has risen between Arabs and Jews in Israel and the occupied territories as U.S. efforts to convene the peace conference near a climax.

Police Minister Milo said on Sunday the government should bar more Arabs from the occupied territories from entering Israel after an attack on Friday in which two Israeli soldiers were killed and 11 wounded.

Last year Israel temporarily barred all Palestinians from the occupied territories from entering Israel after three Jews were stabbed to death in October.

However Mr. Milo, who is close to Mr. Shamir, told reporters after the cabinet meeting he did not want to give such recognition to the border that existed before 1967 — which Mr. Shamir says will never be restored.

Meanwhile, the Israeli group Peace Now filed suit in the supreme court seeking to force Israel to stop building settlements in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. (see page 2).

Reports conflict over Turkish push

(Continued from page 1)

The Iraqi border to try to prevent PKK incursions.

Turkey's governing Motherland Party is under fire for failing to halt the guerrilla attacks. Opposition parties used the issue against the government in their campaigns for the Oct. 20 general elections.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) have been fighting since 1984 to set up a separate Kurdish state in south-eastern Turkey.

The rebels often infiltrate into Turkey from bases in northern Iraq.

Massoud Barzani, the head of the KDP, and witnesses said that instead of rebels, the Turkish warplanes hit civilian villages in Iraq and caused heavy losses to life and property.

Iraqi Kurdish witnesses said three civilians died and 15 were wounded during the air raids.

The raids mark the second time in two months that Turkey has crossed into Iraq to smash bases of PKK camps.

U.N. envoy begins fresh hostage mission

(Continued from page 1)

But the smooth ti-for-ti releases appear to have foundered.

In a videotape released Oct. 6, American hostage Terry Anderson begged all parties not to try to gain small advantages at each step of the process, but keep the goal of freedom for all paramount.

Mr. Anderson, chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press, was grabbed off a Beirut street March 16, 1985 and is the longest held hostage.

The Tehran Times did not say which hostage might be released. The newspaper last predicted that an American would go free after the Sept. 24 release of British

hostage Jackie Mann. But no further hostages came out.

The hostage-holders have said that they wanted Israel to release more of the up to 300 prisoners it holds in Khiam prison in South Lebanon and elsewhere, including the imprisoned cleric Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, before more western hostages went free.

A senior pro-Iranian leader said in Beirut Wednesday the fate of missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad was the main stumbling block to release of the hostages. Arad is the only missing Israeli known to have survived capture.

There have been widespread reports since the release of the last three hostages that an American would be next.

Arabs abroad — do they do enough for promoting national causes?

By Pascal Karmy

I had the opportunity to travel to the U.S. in 1990 and in 1991. I visited in particular New York, but I stayed about two months in California.

During my stay in California I had the opportunity to meet many Palestinians, most of whom had immigrated to the U.S. in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The reasons for their immigration were, basically the same: Israeli occupation and their physical expulsion from their homeland Palestine. Some could no longer bear the oppression and inhuman treatment meted out to them by the Israelis while others had no longer the means of livelihood, having no more access to their own land.

Notwithstanding their long stay in the U.S., the majority yearn for their return to their home-

land, Palestine, for good or for at least a long visit. This prevalent feeling among Palestinians reminded me of the verse of the Arab poet Abu Tammam Al Tai, which goes (roughly translated) like this: "No matter how many homes a youth likes, he always yearns for his first homeland."

Indeed, the love of one's homeland is inherent in one's soul. Thus many Palestinians whom I met had visited Palestine, particularly the village of their childhood. Some had already been destroyed by the Israelis; Emmaus, Yalo and Beit Nabal. On their ruins Jewish settlements had been built. It behooves the Arabs as well as non-Arabs to remember that the destruction of thousands of Palestinian villages or the confiscation of their lands by the Israelis, for the benefit of Jewish immigrants, have displaced Palestinians from their

homes. These facts refute Israeli and Jewish allegations that the Jewish immigration to Palestine has not displaced Palestinians.

It goes without saying that all Palestinians in the U.S. support the Palestinian cause, but, in my opinion, they do not take enough concrete actions.

Their support must be more efficient financially. They should emulate the example of the American Jews who contribute enormous sums to Israel.

It is true that they and other Arabs hold meetings every now and then in clubs and conventions and contribute to needy Palestinians in the occupied territories, but that is nothing in comparison to American Jewish contributions to Israel and the Israelis. Moreover, they do not seem to form a very close-knit group, probably because of their pre-occupation with business. They

do attend social events celebrated by their compatriots, but stronger solidarity is required.

Palestinians in particular and Arabs in general have no powerful newspapers or magazines to make their voice heard in Congress and the White House. They must create a lobby in Congress similar to the Jewish AIPAC. Although the Arabs have formed three or four organisations, they are not yet strong or influential enough to counteract AIPAC's actions in support of Israel which are prejudicial to the Arabs.

I have seen and read in California two newspapers published in Arabic, but unfortunately many of the Arab and Palestinian immigrants do not read or write Arabic or have almost forgotten it while their children and grandchildren do not know good Arabic at all although they may speak the slang Arabic incorrectly. In this connection I observed the

lack of schools to teach Arabic to the children of Arab immigrants.

But while I was in Garden Grove and Anaheim (CA) I was told that there was a sheikh who taught Arabic, and especially the Koran, to the Arabs, I do not think this is enough. In my opinion, regular evening classes should be opened to teach Arabic and Arab history, including that of Palestine. I have watched in CA an Arabic television channel which broadcasts news once a week, mostly social events which take place in the Arab community and advertisements. It does not seem that Palestinian or Arab millionaires care for establishing efficient and strong television networks to counteract the Jewish media and defend Arab

causes.

The Arabs, especially the recent immigrants, normally adhere to Arab customs and traditions, particularly during social events such as betrothal and marriage ceremonies. The Arabs, being known for their hospitality, serve their invitees "mansaf" and offer them delicious homemade sweets such as "baklava" and "knafa" and Turkish coffee. I have observed however that youth of Arab immigrants imitate reprehensible social and living habits of some American youth. Nonetheless, on the whole, the immigrants' children are well brought up, ambitious and studious and many even surpass the American youth.

The writer practised law in Palestine up until the British mandate in 1948. He subsequently served as a legal adviser to UNRWA in Beirut and Vienna. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Algeria's democratic experiment struggles to take off

By John Baggaley
Renter

ALGIERS — The strident slogans of Muslim fundamentalists have faded from the Mediterranean seafloor of the Algerian capital.

But inside parliament a war of wills is producing its own threat to an experiment in democracy for this North African country of 25 million people.

The immediate cause of concern is a row between government and parliament over rules for the next general election.

Newspapers and radio commentators warn of constitutional crisis and a growing disillusion among ordinary citizens struggling with inflation, shortages and lack of jobs.

And the fundamentalists, who appeal most easily to those with little hope, are quietly regrouping.

Their leaders are still held by the military after clashes last June but a split which followed the arrests appears to be healed. Their demands for an Islamic state remain as forceful.

"The giant is awakening and showing it is a force to be reckoned with," a Western diplomat said after a weekend rally by 45,000 militants of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Algeria, after being ruled rigidly for nearly three decades by

members of the only legal party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), has seen sweeping reforms which have allowed other parties to take the political stage.

Riots provoked by poverty in October 1988 were the catalyst for changes, which legalised the FIS, and brought clashes last June — sparked by a belief that the FLN was trying to fix promises parliamentary elections.

For months now, pressure has been growing for the elections to be held, to give the people real choice for the first time.

But for many Algerians, FLN deputies appear unwilling to face an open challenge at the polls and perhaps relinquish the power they held for so long.

Accustomed to secrecy, manoeuvres and intrigue born of necessity during the war for freedom from France, "the same men turn to the same methods," said the monthly journal L'evenir, mouthpiece of one of the opposition parties.

"These habits ... can today destroy the most audacious democratic experiment underway in the southern hemisphere," it added.

One citizen, in a straw poll on Algiers Radio, put it more simply. "They want to prolong their mandate to the maximum."

The FLN, while still the only voice in parliament, passed election laws seen as blatant delaying

tactics ahead of the first parliamentary election under a multi-party system.

It brought instant cries of foul from the opposition. The FIS took to the streets to object and in clashes with security forces last June 55 people died violently.

The poll was postponed and a new government brought in, determined to clean up the voting rules.

The new prime minister, Sidahmad Ghazali, promised "clean and fair" elections this year. Mr. Ghazali, a shrewd politician, spent days seeking consensus with 40 political parties.

It was after going to parliament last month that his plans ran into trouble. Parliament has now delayed a vote three times, countered with its own ideas, and spread suspicion through the political literature about its willingness to play fair.

"It's not a crisis yet, it's an impasse. But it will be a crisis if Ghazali goes," said one diplomat after the third postponement of the vote, now due next Sunday.

"It depends on how far the FLN is prepared to push it. Are they prepared to bring the government down? It looks as though they could be."

The row focuses on the number of seats in a new parliament, on proxy voting — seen by many as wide open to cheating, especially

by fundamentalists — an constituency boundaries and the system for independents to stand for election.

The old boundaries passed by the FLN gave some areas with lower populations, where the FLN was strong, more seats than big population centres where the FIS could expect to win.

The FIS, well organised, swept home in more than 50 per cent of the local authorities during local elections — the first multi-party poll in post-independent Algeria.

Its victory frightened not only many Algerians, but also neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia, as well as causing disquiet in France with its large North African immigrant population.

Brainchild of President Chadli Benjedid, the reforms gave birth to a plethora of parties — 53 at the last count.

The FLN and FIS dominate the field, followed by around eight other parties such as the Socialist Forces (FFS) of veteran inde-

pendence fighter Hocine Ait Ahmad.

Mr. Ghazali, denying any real clash with parliament but saying the government had to implement any decision the deputies took, spoke more bluntly at the weekend.

"Our country is in danger. Our economy threatened with ruin. Our compatriots are bewildered. Our problems are many and complex, affecting the population in daily life," he said.

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Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (October 4-October 11, 1991)

AMMAN — Speculation over whether the Group of Seven (G-7) will decide to favour a strong yen to curb Japan's trade surplus grabbed most of the attention in the market during the past week. But the conflicting nature of speculation, together with the absence of major news items, kept traders sidelined with regard to the dollar, concentrating most of the trading action on the crosses. The U.S. currency ended the week an average of 0.69% higher against major European currencies, but 0.21% lower against the yen, compared to the previous week's closing rates.

The dollar rallied Monday on rising speculation of a G-7 communiqué in the following weekend calling for a stronger yen. Trading activity thus centered on the mark/yen cross, taking the Japanese currency higher against the dollar. The dollar consequently closed lower against the yen but higher against major European currencies. Its closing rates of 1.6802 marks and 1.7350 dollars to the pound sterling proved to be its lowest levels of the week, however.

Tuesday took the dollar sharply higher, mainly against the pound sterling, closing at its highest levels for the week against major European currencies at 1.7038 marks and 1.7030 dollars to the pound sterling. The U.S. unit was supported on its way up by a combination of factors. These included a Bush administration package aimed at encouraging increased bank lending to boost economic recovery in the U.S., the fading of speculation re a G-7 yen support plan, and the dollar breaching resistance at 1.7010 marks. Meanwhile, the pound dropped to 2.9016 marks compared to 2.9151 marks the previous day.

Rumours that President Gorbachev had been shot took the U.S. unit to a high of 1.7105 marks in early Far Eastern trading Wednesday. It retreated later on, however, upon the denial of said news by Soviet officials, and went further down in New York as it breached several support levels, the last being 1.6990 marks. The British currency recovered to 2.9068 marks due to fear of a Bank of England intervention to support it.

The dollar rallied again against all major currencies Thursday, reaching its highest closing level against the Japanese currency at 1.6835 yen. Although it retreated significantly Friday, it nevertheless closed in New York somewhat higher against major European currencies but marginally lower against the yen, compared to its closing levels the previous Friday. Observers attributed the dollar's retreat to two main factors. On the one hand, the lingering influence of comments made by U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady confirming the significance of the Japanese trade surplus issue to the U.S. This brought about a revival of speculation concerning a G-7 sponsored yen rise. On the other hand, the release of a mere 0.1% rise in September's U.S. Producer Prices, and a better than expected rise of 0.7 per cent in Retail Sales, spurred some analysts and a White House official to comment on the possibility of further Fed easing in view of continued moderation in inflation figures, thus undermining the dollar.

As for this week, prevalent sentiment remains bearish towards the dollar, emanating from on-going expectations of an interest rate cut by the Fed. Sentiment is mixed, however, regarding whether G-7 meetings in Bangkok Sunday, Oct. 13, will have anything to say about exchange rates.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	4/10/91 Close	11/10/91 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.7370	1.7235	-0.76%
Deutsche Mark	1.6780	1.6885	-0.62%
Swiss Franc	1.4695	1.4795	-0.68%
French Franc	5.2160	5.2540	-0.47%
Japanese Yen	129.80	129.53	0.20%

USD Per STD

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	.6860	.6880
Sterling Pound	1.1808	1.1867
Deutsche Mark	.4058	.4078
Swiss Franc	.4637	.4660
French Franc	.1191	.1197
Japanese Yen	.5290	.5316
Dutch Guilder	.3602	.3620
Swedish Krona	.1111	.1117
Italian Lira	.0542	.0545
Belgian Franc	.01970	.01980

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Saudi Arabia details grants to countries hit by Gulf crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Saudi government has informed the secretary-general of the United Nations that the kingdom has extended over \$4,696 million in outright grants to nine countries which suffered from the Gulf crisis.

According to the letter, which was signed by Mohammad Mirdas Qalantani, the Saudi deputy charge d'affaires at the U.N., Egypt and Syria topped the list with \$1,786 million and \$1,050 million respectively.

The letter, distributed as a Security Council document and faxed to the Jordan Times, includes a list of \$12.3 million grant to Djibouti, \$33.3 million to Somalia, \$93.3 million to Lebanon, \$1,160 million (in oil) to Turkey, \$590 million (\$90 million in oil) to Morocco, \$70 million (in oil) to Pakistan and \$8 million to Bangladesh.

The Saudi government mentioned in its letter its contributions also through various international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Jordan and Yemen were not specifically listed as recipients of Saudi aid despite being of main victims from the Gulf crisis.

Yemen inaugurates pipeline from oilfield to Aden

SANAA (R) — Yemeni Prime Minister Haider Abu Bakr Al Attas inaugurated a pipeline from oilfields southeast of Sanaa to the Gulf of Aden Sunday.

The 207-kilometre pipeline, built by the Soviet company Technoexport, will carry five million tonnes of crude a year (about 100,000 barrels a day) from the Iyad West oilfield in Shabwa province to an export terminal at the port of Raddhoun.

Yemen has previously been trucking the crude at great expense to Aden refinery at a rate

Haider Abu Bakr Al Attas of 10,000 barrels a day.

Mr. Attas said the first shipment of crude would be exported within a few months.

Technoexport discovered oil in Shabwa in the mid-1980s but declined to sign a joint production agreement with the Yemeni government. It will instead receive about \$500 million to compensate it for its investment.

U.S. brokerage houses record \$859m profit in second quarter

NEW YORK (R) — The profits of U.S. brokerage houses soared nearly 84 per cent in the second quarter, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) has said, indicating the industry continues to recover from 1990's worst-ever earnings.

The NYSE said profits of its member firms that do business with the public climbed to \$859 million, an 83.9 per cent increase from the \$467 million earned in the second quarter of 1990.

The profits, however, were down slightly from the first quarter of this year, when the brokerages posted earnings of \$957 million. Analysts said the trading pace remained comfortably above last year's depressed level, even though the securities industry recorded a modest drop in earnings compared with the super-strong first three months of this year.

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Rich, poor countries fight war of words over arms spending

BANGKOK (R) — A war of words was unfolding Sunday between rich and poor nations over the right of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to call for cuts in arms spending.

Repeated appeals by IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus for all countries to reduce their arms budgets have won plaudits among many industrial nations but have irritated some big spenders in the developing world.

Dutch Finance Minister Wim Kok backed the IMF's stand on arms expenditure in a speech Sunday to an influential policy-making panel even though he said the IMF should retain its non-political character.

"Military expenditure is a legitimate concern of the fund, as it can have undesirable consequences," Mr. Kok told the IMF's Interim Committee.

"The fund can, in fact, give its considered comments, indeed criticism, in cases of excessive military spending to the authorities concerned without rocking its non-political foundation, precisely because it is non-political," he said.

The Dutch minister's remarks followed a snub delivered to Mr. Camdessus Saturday by the Group of 24 (G-24) developing nations, which said in a statement the IMF and World Bank should not get involved in issues beyond their strict economic and financial mandate.

Colombian Finance Minister Rudolf Hommes, who chaired the G-24 meeting, said some developing countries feared the IMF might make cuts in military spending a condition for extending fresh loans.

"Some countries fear the possibility that this problem would appear in the conditionality of the IMF and the World Bank," he said.

"The fear is that we will be victims of a prodigal son syndrome," Mr. Hommes said, referring to the possibility that the Soviet Union and East Europe would win the undivided attention of the IMF.

"I think it's a reasonable fear," he said, adding: "Most of these countries are already industrial while we are developing countries." The G-24 criticised developed nations for showing fiscal laxity and driving up interest rates at a

time when debt-strapped developing countries were tightening their belts and reining in spending.

The richer nations were also asked to dismantle barriers to imports. "Use of non-tariff barriers by industrial countries has grown significantly," the statement said.

Twenty of the top 24 industrial nations were "on balance, more protectionist now than they were 10 years ago," it said.

India and Pakistan, confronting each other across a disputed border, have taken strong positions against IMF calls for cuts in arms spending.

The Group of 10 (G-10) rich nations riposted Sunday in its final statement, issued after a brief meeting of finance ministers. The G-10 called for cuts "in unproductive expenditures including excessive military expenditures, in all countries."

A Dutch official said the reference was inserted at the request of Italy, with the backing of Belgium and the Netherlands.

The G-10 is made up of the Group of Seven (G-7) countries, the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Britain and

Canada, plus the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden. Switzerland, which is not a member of the IMF, is the 11th member of G-10.

The rift over the issue is not solely between rich and poor countries.

"There are shades of opinion both among the industrial and the developing countries," an Argentine official said.

Latin American countries, with memories still fresh of oppressive military dictatorships, are enthusiastic advocates of lower arms spending. Colombia had earlier hoped the G-24 would make an explicit stand against high arms spending.

In contrast, Middle East nations still spend more than 10 per cent of their economic output on armaments.

The United States is believed to have doubts as to precisely what role the IMF should play in the debate while Germany is thought to be considering curbs on bilateral aid to big arms spenders.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady made no reference to the issue in his speech to the Interim Committee.

Moellemann attacks east German work creation programmes

Berlin (R) — Germany's entire economy is threatened by government plans to expand state funded work creation schemes in its former communist east, Economics Minister Juergen Moellemann has said.

Writing in the influential Handelsblatt business daily, Mr. Moellemann said the schemes stifled innovation, allocated too much money to consumption rather than investment and strained the budgetary resources of western Germany.

His comments fly in the face of the policies of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's party, which reluctantly adopted work creation schemes earlier this year to avoid social unrest in eastern Germany.

Nearly two million workers have been kept off the east's jobless lines through early retirement, work creation and retraining schemes at a cost of more than 20 billion marks (\$12 billion). The government plans an expansion in 1992.

The schemes, which pay a full wage rather than unemployment benefit, employ redundant workers on infrastructure projects and tearing down decrepit factories.

Mr. Moellemann, a regular critic of government profligacy, said Germany could not afford these generous payments and that workers should accept lower wages.

He also said many of the tasks undertaken by work creation schemes could just as well be done by the private sector and that the government's policies risked having to subsidise the east for years to come.

EC commission calls for Third World development aid boost

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Commission is urging wealthy nations to make good a pledge to spend 0.7 per cent of their economic output on aid to developing countries.

The commission, the European Community's (EC) executive branch, also said the industrialised world might need to mobilise additional public and private funds to help the Third World tackle global environmental threats.

In a strategy paper recommending the EC position at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) set for next June in Rio De Janeiro, the commission said rich nations should set a timetable at the meeting for living up to their aid pledge.

"Only Scandinavian countries have met the goal so far. 'At UNCED, industrialised countries should agree on a timetable for the fulfilment of their commitments,' the commission said.

OECD figures published last month showed that member countries spent an average 0.35 per cent of gross domestic product on development aid in 1990.

Norway spent the highest proportion at 1.17 per cent while Ireland came out lowest with 0.16 per cent.

The commission paper said donor countries should state that such aid must be used for projects that contributed to "sustainable" or environmentally benign, development.

It said additional funding may be needed to support the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable use of their natural resources and tackle problems such as the greenhouse effect.

But even substantial government aid would not be enough to meet the growing needs of developing and eastern and central European countries, it said. New domestic funding and private external resources would also have to be mobilised.

The commission said financial assistance to combat worldwide environmental threats should be

granted only to countries which made genuine commitment to tackle such problems — for example by signing up to international conventions.

As well as direct aid, it urged further debt servicing relief to enable Third World and eastern and central European countries to spend more of their own funds on environmental protection.

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Yugoslav fighting threatens shaky truce

Relief convoy nears Vukovar

ZAGREB (R) — A relief convoy approached the besieged Croatian town of Vukovar Sunday in its third attempt to deliver emergency aid, but heavy fighting continued to threaten a shaky truce in the rebel republic.

After two abortive efforts, the convoy of 50 trucks, ambulances and buses carrying food and medicine made a hazardous journey through northeastern Croatia accompanied by the boom of artillery fire and the thud of mortars.

Led by European Community (EC) ceasefire monitors in a white car and with Red Cross flags flying, it reached no-man's-land between Croatian and Serbian positions for the first time. It was just 10 kilometres outside Vukovar by early afternoon.

Under a faltering ceasefire agreement, Croatian forces were expected to allow the remaining federal troops to leave Boronj Barracks in the Croatian capital, Zagreb, where they have been trapped for almost a month.

The moves are crucial to the success of the eighth truce in a conflict which has killed more than 1,000 people since Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in June and its 600,000-strong Serbian minority rebelled.

In a new international drive to end the fighting, former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance met Serbian, federal and army leaders in Belgrade to prepare a report for the United Nations.

But Croatian Foreign Minister Zvonimir Sesarovic told Croatian Radio eight people were killed in a new eruption of fighting around Vukovar Sunday. Croatian fighters on the spot told reporters the death toll could be as high as 25.

EC ceasefire monitors said they had received guarantees from the army that the convoy would get through to Vukovar.

"We have been given full assurances by the army that we will get in and out," Joseph Frigan told reporters as he travelled with the convoy.

"We will go in with sirens wailing and lights flashing and meet the army... in no-man's-land."

The aid should have got through Saturday. But although the first troops left their barracks in Zagreb Saturday, the Vukovar relief convoy was halted by heavy fighting and Croatian forces responded by restoring the blockade at Boronj.

The first convoy reached Bihac in the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina on Sunday. But about 40 Croatian fighters were still guarding the Boronj Barracks in light drizzle as the remaining troops waited inside for the sign to leave.

Croatian Radio reported artillery and mortar fire around Vukovar and the neighbouring towns of Vinkovci, Nustar and Marinci. Croatian forces said they had captured Marinci but later said Serbian fighters had forced them back.

The radio said federal planes dropped two bombs on nearby Borovo Naselje and that a military depot in the town of Ogulin in central Croatia came under aid attack. The reports could not be confirmed.

Trouble spots on the Adriatic coast and in southern Croatia appeared quiet.

Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek Saturday again threatened EC sanctions against



A Croatian National Guard checks for snipers after an attack on Osijek.

Serbia and the army unless they agreed to arrange for the Serb-led army to withdraw from Croatia within a month.

The army says it must stay in Serbian-dominated areas of Croatia to protect them against "physical liquidation."

Mr. Vance, U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar's personal envoy, had separate talks in Belgrade with Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic on the country's economy and the crisis.

Mr. Vance arrived Saturday to find federal Yugoslav authority in tatters, the economy in a state of collapse and the country facing the prospect of all-out civil war if the latest ceasefire failed.

He was also due to meet Yugoslav Defence Minister Veljko Kadijevic before going to the Hague, where a plenary session of the EC peace conference

Yugoslavia is planned for Monday.

In Sydney, Australia, about 10,000 Croatian Australians marched on parliament house Sunday to demand that Australia recognise the republic fighting for independence from Yugoslavia.

The demonstration, one of several around the country, was joined by Croatia's Deputy Foreign Minister Mihajlo Montijo, who urged Australia to lead the world in granting recognition.

"If you are against killing you have to recognise us because then we will be protected by the United Nations," Mr. Montijo told a news conference in Canberra.

"We need help, we need support."

Montijo, in Australia to lobby the government, said Croatia's National Guard was armed with only rifles against the tanks, heavy artillery and aircraft of the federal army.

Gorbachev says no economic union without political ties

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev has told assertive Soviet republics that they cannot have an economic union without committing themselves to some form of political framework.

In a television interview broadcast Saturday, he also expressed confidence that the Ukraine, second most powerful of the 12 republics, would choose to stay in the new looser union he was striving to create.

"I cannot think of a union without the Ukraine, I cannot imagine it," he said. "I am sure that the Ukrainians and Russians, everyone who lives there, will come to the same conclusion, I am convinced of it."

He was referring to the referendum to be held in the republic of 52 million people of Dec. 1 to endorse the declaration of independence in its parliament passed on Aug. 24.

Gorbachev won pledges Friday from leaders of 10 republics, including the Ukraine, that by next Tuesday they would sign an outline agreement governing their continued economic relations.

Gorbachev said a food distribution agreement to ensure supplies through the winter was a crucial part of it. Soviet Premier Ivan Silayev told reporters earlier that he was confident the food agreement would be signed by Tuesday too.

"Now every republic realises that it is impossible to overcome the grave economic crisis alone," Mr. Silayev said.

Gorbachev sees the economic accord, initiated in the Kazakhstan capital Alma Ata on Oct. 2, as a vital first step towards a new union treaty to hold the country together.

He criticised those who thought they could enjoy the advantages of a common economic space while remaining free of all political ties and responsibilities.

"That means that someone (a republic) who wants access to the resources of Russia, Kazakhstan or the Ukraine would be totally free, with no political obligations," he said.

He also laid into politicians, especially in the giant Russian Republic, who saw a weak political union as a temporary structure which they would quit later.

"If there is a conflict based on this kind of approach, then this is not Croatia and Serbia — this would be far more terrible," he said.

"We cannot split up. We must split up the power, give the republics as much oxygen as possible."

Pactious jostling for power in the Russian Republic under President Boris Yeltsin have rejected

the Alma Ata agreement, saying Russia would be exploited by the other republics.

They forced the resignation of the Russian Economy Minister, Yevgeny Saburov, last week by repudiating the agreement which he had initiated on the republic's behalf.

But Mr. Silayev told Russian Television Saturday that Mr. Yeltsin had refused to accept Mr. Saburov's resignation. "He (Yeltsin) is not prepared to let him go," Mr. Silayev said. "He had the authority for the talks in Alma Ata and the initiating."

Akayev wins in Soviet Kyrgyzstan

BISHKEK, Soviet Union (R) — Askar Akayev, the only candidate in Soviet Kyrgyzstan's first presidential election, was elected with about 95 per cent of the vote, officials said Sunday.

Mr. Akayev, a 46-year-old quantum physicist, has already run the Central Asian Republic of 4.3 million people for a year. He has pledged to steer Kyrgyzstan cautiously away from Moscow and closer to cooperation with the West.

Markil Ibrayev, chairman of the Election Commission, said preliminary results from Saturday's poll gave Mr. Akayev about 95 per cent of the vote. Turnout was about 90 per cent.

Pope urges Brazil to end 'perverse inequalities'

NATAL, Brazil (R) — Pope John Paul has urged Brazilians to wipe out the "perverse economic inequalities" which keep a select few living in opulence while the majority struggle with grinding poverty.

The Pope began his 10-day trip to Brazil, the world's largest Catholic country, with a ringing appeal for solidarity with the less fortunate.

Speaking on his arrival in the northeastern city of Natal, the Pope said he wanted his visit to benefit all Brazilians, but stated clearly that the country needed justice and equality.

This had to be achieved, he said, through "solidarity with the disadvantaged, those who help the most, so that perverse economic inequalities, which bring with them intolerable individual and social discrimination, may vanish."

According to a recent study, the gap between rich and poor and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few are both increasing.

Cambodian refugees flee Khmer Rouge camps for U.N. protection

BANGKOK (R) — Cambodian refugees in Thailand, fearing that Khmer Rouge guerrillas will force them back across the border into areas they control, are fleeing to the United Nations for protection, aid workers said Sunday.

They said refugees were leaving their homes in Khmer Rouge-controlled camps and seeking shelter in a hastily erected U.N. tent town protected by the Thai army.

"The people are very worried after what happened in Site 8," an aid worker said. "They fear they will get caught and come to spend the night in temporary tents."

The Communist Khmer Rouge, whose 1975-79 rule of Cambodia killed more than a million people, is seeking to bolster its influence inside the country before U.N.-supervised elections as part of a plan to end the 13-year civil war.

Last week it detained 16 administrators of Site 8 camp and appointed new officials to speed the repatriation of potential voters into zones it controls inside Cambodia, military sources said.

The tents carrying U.N. emblems were put up near O'Trao Camp, where 17,000 refugees live, after the Thai army received a report that the Khmer Rouge had ordered camp administrators to report to a guerrilla-controlled area near along Veag in Cambodia on Oct. 15.

A Khmer Rouge administrator inside Cambodia told reporters Friday that Khmer Rouge leaders at a meeting last month said they wanted all refugees under their control to resettle in Cambodia.

"We would allocate a piece of land for each family and build up our towns and cities here (in northwestern Cambodia) instead of going back to Phnom Penh," the administrator, Mit Ron, said.

"Only those leaders such as SNC (Supreme National Council) members and ministers will go back."

The SNC groups the Khmer Rouge, two other guerrilla factions and the government installed after Vietnamese troops ousted the Khmer Rouge in 1979.

Council leaders are due to go to Phnom Penh after a peace accord signed in Paris this month.

Mr. Mit Ron said most families of soldiers at Site 8 had moved back to Cambodia and a logging concession had been granted to three Thai companies to earn money with which to build a

town.

The Khmer Rouge administrators more than 70,000 refugees with U.N. assistance just inside Thailand. Site 8, with about 43,000, is the largest.

Thailand will not intervene in Khmer Rouge plans to resettle its people, a senior Thai source who helped the government draw up its Cambodian policy told Reuters.

"They want to resettle their people in the area where natural resources are still rich and, of course, they want to keep control of their people pending the election, so I don't think we can do much to stop them," he said.

The United Nations has called on the Thais to intervene.

S.A.M.S. Kibria, U.N. special representative for humanitarian assistance to Cambodians, said Saturday he had told U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and SNC head, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, of the Khmer Rouge resettlement plan.

"This is happening in the territory of Thailand. And our understanding has always been that Thailand is not in favour of uncoordinated repatriation outside the U.N. arrangement," Mr. Kibria said.

Bulgarian election challenges former Communists

SOFIA (AP) — Voters went to the polls Sunday in parliamentary elections that were expected to challenge the governing former Communist Party's hold on power.

Polls opened at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT). Some 6.5 million people are eligible to vote in this Balkan nation of 9 million people.

"We have suffered enough. Now is our last chance. If the Communists win again we are lost," said voter Simeon Stefanov, 50.

The voting will be Bulgaria's second election since the 1989 fall of Communist leader Todor Zhivkov. In the first free postwar elections in June 1990, the former Communists won 211 seats in the 400-seat parliament.

"I hope that after these elections, Bulgaria will become finally a normal country. Otherwise I will look for a chance in the West," said Gnyan Iliev, a 27-year-old taxi driver.

The Communists, who have renamed themselves the Socialist Party, dominate a coalition government headed by independent Prime Minister Dimitar Popov.

A total of 61 parties were taking part in the elections — 31 of them allied in nine different coalitions. The remaining 30 parties will run independently.

Fewer than two parties, however, stand a chance to garner the 4 per cent of the vote required by the constitution for parliamentary representation.

In the June 1990 elections, the main opposition Union of Democratic Forces won 144 seats in parliament.

Sex and porn row hits at sagging Congress image

WASHINGTON (R) — You debate sex, lies and pornography on prime-time television and children are advised not to watch.

Your cheques bounce and you don't pay your restaurant bills or parking tickets.

You are a member of the U.S. Congress and this is not a good time for American legislators.

Public focus is on Congress with lurid testimony emerging from a sexual harassment storm involving U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas and law Professor Anita Hill.

Judge Thomas, a black conservative judge, ended a grueling day Saturday as a witness at his own confirmation hearing by saying charges that he sexually harassed his former aide, also black, were "connected to destroy me."

The hearing, to determine who is telling the truth, has drawn politicians' attention away from great work issues.

Two television networks CBS and NBC advise parents to consider if children should watch the deliberations.

Many commentators believe Congress's reputation has been as much damaged by the Thomas hearings as the nominee and his main accuser Anita Hill who alleges he sexually harassed her by repeatedly asking for dates and talking about pornography.

Weekend newspapers ran articles asking questions like "can the government get anything right any more?" described the confirmation hearings as a "circus" and declared: "Washington is having a nervous breakdown."

As in any other country, the parliamentarians of Congress, members of the House of Representatives (lower house) and Senate (upper house), are rarely favourites of the public.

But in a sign of how far Congress's standing has dropped, a New York Times poll last week found only 27 per cent approved of how Congress handles its job.

Few people doubt Congress's standing fell further in the days after the poll as senators involved in the hearings argued about how to conduct the Thomas probe, threatened to resign and were lectured by Judge Thomas about "lynching."

The debate about the standing of Congress has erupted at a time when the Democrats control both houses but are on the defensive against sustained criticism by U.S. President George Bush, riding high on foreign policy triumphs and thwarting Democratic-backed legislation with repeated vetoes.

Asked if the hearings were hurting Congress's image, political analyst William Schneider told Cable News Network: "I think this is part of the distaste for the political process — for Congress, in particular."

"I think there is a sense the whole process is out of control, that these guys are in it for themselves, that the public business is not being attended to. Put this (the hearings) along with the controversy over cheque bouncing and free lunches and you have a lot of deep anger out there."

Democrats draw Bush into fray over economy

WASHINGTON (R) — Democratic candidates for the U.S. presidency have used the lingering recession and the issue of tax fairness to put George Bush on the defensive early in the 1992 campaign.

Mr. Bush had hoped to remain above the political fray well into next year. But twice in the past 10 days he has had to defend his economic policies and to outline new strategies to restore consumer confidence, aid the jobless and ease credit conditions.

Previously Mr. Bush had argued against tinkering with the economy, but a White House official admitted to a change of mind.

"There is a re-examination of the whole economic growth issue," the official said.

Mr. Bush blocked a Democratic move in congress in August to extend benefits for the long-term unemployed, arguing it would violate a budget agreement between Congress and the White House.

But now he has proposed measures to encourage bank lending and has urged Congress to approve another approach to jobless benefits that he says would not break the budget pact. He has also renewed a call for a cut in the capital gains tax.

During 1990 congressional election Mr. Bush pushed for a capital gains tax which he said would spur investment, but Democrats called it a tax break for the wealthy and accused Mr. Bush of being unfair to the middle class.

Last week Mr. Bush instructed his economic advisers to find ways to advance his "growth package," a collection of ideas he proposed in February, including a cut in the tax on capital gains from sale of assets such as homes and stocks.

The top marginal tax rate is now 28 per cent on capital gains. Mr. Bush proposed lowering it to 19.6 per cent on assets held for at least three years.

The president argued then and in numerous speeches since that the capital gains tax cut would boost economic growth and create jobs.

His renewed support for the tax cut, combined with his veto Friday of a second congressional attempt to extend benefits for the long-term unemployed, has given the Democrats new ammunition as the election year nears.

"I believe there's a hunger in America, a hunger to turn away from the greed and selfishness of George Herbert Walker Bush and J. Danforth Quayle," says Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa in his campaign speeches.

Arkansas governor Bill Clinton agrees.

"For 12 years, the Republicans have raised taxes on the middle class. It's time to give the middle class tax relief," Mr. Clinton said in declaring his candidacy for the Democratic nomination earlier this month.

Middle class voters are crucial to the Democrats' hopes in 1992. They were a traditional source of Democratic strength until 1980, when many voted for republican Ronald Reagan. They also backed Mr. Reagan in 1984 and Mr. Bush in 1988.

Ethnic conflicts are 'catastrophic' as Soviet Union fades

KIROVAKAN, Armenia (AP) — One by one, the refugees told the American congresswoman their stories, in tearful or stone-faced delivery: Homes burned, women violated, a throat slashed.

They were Armenians from Azerbaijan, but they might have been Uzbeks from Kirgizia, Georgian Turks from Uzbekistan or Ossetians from Georgia. As the union fades, minorities suffer in every republic.

"Ethnic conflict is one of worst problems facing the Soviet Union, and it will get worse, much worse," said Georgy Tarazevich, chairman of the Supreme Soviet Commission on Nationality Policy.

Viktor Koslov, a specialist in the Soviet Academy of Sciences, called it "absolutely certain" that the total of refugees within the country would swell from its level of more than a million.

Armed assaults and riots have already killed hundreds in the Caucasus and Central Asia, but the most conflicts in the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia itself affect more than 100 nationalities.

"The situation is catastrophic," Mr. Koslov said, predicting new clashes. "Political leaders don't understand how serious it is. They are taking no action to prevent its getting worse."

From the 1920s to recent years, the Kremlin used force to suppress cultures and religions. Josef Stalin dealt with minority problems by loading whole towns onto boxcars and moving them to remote regions.

Now the central government is losing its power to keep order, the experts say, while leaders in breakaway republics spur resurgent national and religious feelings to build power bases.

In desperate pockets across the Soviet Union, families who know little of the great picture try to survive with the scraps of clothes and cooking pots they salvaged in fleeing for their lives.

Armenians in Kirovakan, a small city still shaken from the 1988 earthquake, told U.S. representative Barbara Boxer their side of an ancient fight over land in the neighbouring Republic of Azerbaijan.

Sergei Gregorian, in a stunned voice beyond emotion, told how marauders burst into his son's apartment in Baku last year and held his daughter-in-law by the hair while they stabbed her mother.

"She was still alive and was taken to the hospital where she was stabbed again in the throat," he said. "No one knows why. I ran away to Armenia with my family. No clothes, no money."

Others said that, without restraining Soviet forces, Azerbai-

jani troops are assaulting villages in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and in Shakhumyan, an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan.

At least 260,000 Armenians have been driven out of Azerbaijan after pogroms since 1988, half of them from the capital of Baku, according to Armenian Prime Minister Vazken Manoukian.

But Abbas Safarov of the Azerbaijani Refugee Society in Baku said 194,000 of his people fled Armenia. When Armenians raided his own village, he said, his 83-year-old mother was terrified.

"She told us it was the end of line for our family," he said. "With those words, she died."

No reliable figures quantify the overall crisis. A recent Pravda survey estimated internal refugees at 1.5 million, counting many people displaced from the Baltic states with limited hardship.

At least a fourth of the refugees have no work in a job market glutted with recent graduates and other qualified candidates. In most places, even local residents wait many years for housing.

Major conflicts receive some attention from human rights groups and Soviet politicians. Russian President Boris Yeltsin led a recent effort to mediate

over Nagorno-Karabakh.

But many victims are from small minorities whose claims to homelands have weakened over time and whose causes stir little interest.

"When lions and tigers are fighting, who takes time to worry about the rabbits?" Mr. Koslov put it.

Among the worst off are Meskhetian Turks, moved by Stalin from Georgia to the Fergana Valley in Uzbekistan. Sporadic pogroms killed some last year, and many fear new attacks are imminent.

Though of Turkish stock, the Meskhetians sank deep roots in Georgia and developed their own distinct culture in a land they have not seen in two generations.

"The Uzbeks are hounding them out, but they have nowhere to go," Mr. Tarazevich said. "All of our repeated efforts to persuade the Georgian government to make land available have been to no avail."

Georgia, meanwhile, is at war with the autonomous region of South Ossetia, northwest of Tbilisi, which declared its own independence when Georgia separated from the union.

Ossetians, an ancient people of unknown origins, trace their claims to parts of Georgia back to biblical times.

At least 80,000 South Ossetians

are crowded into Vladikavkaz in southern Russia, where hard-pressed local families resent their presence.

Altogether, at least 200,000 refugees are in Russia, the largest of the 12 republics, and another 160,000 are expected by the end of the year, the daily Rabochaya Tribuna reported in September.

Since then, however, political turmoil in Tadzhikistan touched off a renewed exodus of Russian-speaking settlers, a wave that could easily spread to Uzbekistan and Turkmenia, specialists said.

Up to half of all Russian residents want to leave Moldova, an independent republic bordering Romania, according to Pravda.

Returning refugees find grave problems in a Russian economy where 80 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

On a larger scale, worsening ethnic conflict could poison the growth of a new economic, political and social union among Soviet republics, the experts say.

In Kirovakan and other refugee centres, however, people like Sergei Gregorian had more immediate concerns about their own survival.

"I had built that house myself with my own hands," he told Ms. Boxer, adding that he had grown up like any other Soviet citizen in Baku. "I worked hard because I wanted to die in my own home."

Column 8

Mozart may have been poisoned by medicine, doctor says

LONDON (R) — Mozart may have been poisoned by mercury and antimony used by doctors treating him for depression and fever, a British doctor has said.

Dr. Ian James told the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine the composer died in 1791 from apparent pneumonia and kidney failure and had probably been treated with mercury and antimony. Mozart's death in Vienna at the age of 35 has long been the source of speculation.

One theory was that he had been poisoned by Salieri, a less talented rival. Mercury is now recognised as a renal poison. Antimony was often contaminated with arsenic in Vienna at that time and the combination would have proved lethal, James said.

Public toilet explodes in Peking

PEKING (AP) — A public toilet in a residential area exploded, shattering manhole covers and spewing a fireball skyward, an official newspaper has reported.

Residents of a small street in Peking's eastern district heard a loud bang Thursday night and saw a ball of flames and smoke coming from the women's side of their public squat toilet, the Peking Evening News (Beijing Wensao) reported. An old woman came scrambling out from the women's side, and a young man ran from the other side, the report said. Both suffered minor burns. A succession of explosions followed in the sewage system, shattering 12 heavy manhole covers and windows, and causing an old one-story home and a shed to collapse, the report said.

Picasso, Pissarro paintings lost in London fire

LONDON (AP) — Paintings by Picasso and French painter Camille Pissarro were destroyed earlier this week by a fire apparently set deliberately in an antique warehouse, police said Friday.

A Scotland Yard spokeswoman said detectives were treating Monday night's fire in the warehouse near London's Heathrow Airport as arson.

The spokeswoman said she did not have the names of the works destroyed or their owners. Mark Baxter, a spokesman for James Bourlet and Sons Ltd., the owners of the warehouse, said he could not confirm or deny that the paintings had been lost. British news reports on the fire said valuable paintings, bronze sculptures, antique furniture, porcelain and other treasures worth between £50 million and 100 million (\$85 million to \$171 million) were destroyed in the blaze.

James Bourlet and Sons Ltd. said items worth more than £300,000 (\$513,000) were recovered from the debris Friday. "Artifacts worth an estimated £25 million (\$42 million) were recovered Wednesday from the specially built strong room with only minimal damage," the company said in a statement.

Dispute over Apple logos settled out of court

LONDON (AP) — A multimillion dollar trademark battle between Apple Computer Inc. and the Beatles' Apple Corps holding company over their similar corporate logos has ended with an out-of-court settlement.

Apple Corps, formed by the Beatles in 1963 to manage their music rights, accused Apple Computer of violating a 1981 agreement by using its Apple logo on music synthesizing equipment.

Apple Computer's logo features a horizontally striped apple with a bite out of it and a leaf on top, while the Apple Corp. logo is an apple with a stalk on top. The two-year-old dispute centred on Apple Computer's musical instrument digital interface — or MIDI — computer maker had agreed to use the Apple logo only on computer equipment in order to avoid interfering with the British company's music business.

Gordon Pollock, a lawyer for Apple Corps, said in the high court Friday that the companies had reached an amicable settlement. Apple Corps sued Apple Computer in the court last Oct. 29. "It has been a long, hard road," Pollock said. He said the terms of the settlement were confidential.

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